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MEN AND MANNERS
IN THE DAYS OF
CHRIST

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Studies and Character Sketches
of the First Century

By
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PREFACE

Of this series of essays numbers 1, 4, and 15 have appeared in *The Dublin Review*; numbers 2 and 16 in *The Catholic Gazette*; numbers 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*. In several instances they have been corrected, modified and enlarged. I wish to express my hearty thanks to the Editors of the above periodicals for permission to reprint. Essays 7, 12, 13, 14, 17 hereby appear in print for the first time.

As in *Prophets, Priests and Publicans*, so in this Volume, the essays are illustrating New Testament times, and thus loosely connected. As many find it more pleasant to study history in vivid *vignettes* and character sketches than in chapters covering a wider scope, the author hopes for this volume a success similar to that of the previous ones.

My thanks are due to Rev. J. Hogan for his valuable help and to Rev. J. Bagshawe for assistance in reading the proofs.

J. P. Arendzen.

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Men and Manners in the Days of Christ

I

THE DATE OF CHRIST'S DEATH

ARE we to have done with a movable Easter? At present we are keeping Easter on the first Sunday after the first full moon in spring. Spring begins at the vernal equinox, March 21st, when day and night are of the same length all over the earth, or, at least, practically so. The earliest possible Easter is therefore March 22nd, the latest possible, April 25th. When it happens that full moon falls on a Saturday and that Saturday be March 21st, then on the very next day Easter is kept on its earliest possible date. When it happens that full moon falls on a Sunday and that Sunday be April 18th, we have to wait till the following Sunday, and we have our latest possible Easter on April 25th.

Thus Easter can vary by 35 days, the length of a whole cycle of the moon, i.e. about 29½, plus the inside of a week. Owing to the concurrence of several variables in calculating Easter, there seems to be no regular sequence in its occurrence, at least, for those who are not astronomers. This year's Easter, April 8th, has occurred in 1917, but will not occur again in the lifetime of most of our readers. This variation is troublesome and disturbing in commercial and civil life, and it is not to be wondered at that people want to change it.

Easter is meant to be the anniversary of Christ's resurrection: why, then, did Christians put their feast on a movable date at all?

Christians kept the remembrance of our Lord's resurrection week after week on a Sunday ; it was natural that the solemn annual commemoration should also be kept on a Sunday. Now, the first Christians were Jews, and it was easy to remember that our Lord rose the Sunday after the Jewish Passover. The real calendar date of the *solar* year was soon forgotten. The Jews and the Eastern Semites had no solar months at all and only a very approximate way of conforming to the solar year. In the incredible confusion of calendars in the first centuries of our era in the East it was difficult to fix and express a date. If someone had marked the exact year " from the founding of the city " (A.U.C.) of Rome, and the Roman month and the relation to the Kalends, Ides or Nones thereof, there would be no difficulty in settling the date. Eastern Christians, however, either did not use this system of dates, or, in passing through districts where different eras and calendars prevailed, found it impossible to remember or express the correct day and year.

Perhaps some readers may think that if now a fixed Easter be adopted, Christians had best appoint the Sunday nearest to the actual day in our present calendar, on which our Lord rose from the dead. At first this may not seem a difficult thing to do, but on second thoughts one realizes the intricacies of the problem.

Let us see. It was a Friday when our Lord died. It was during the governorship of Pontius Pilate, i.e. A.D. 26 to 36. It was the day of, or the day before, the Jewish Passover, i.e. the day of the spring full moon, or the 14th of the Jewish month Nisan ; that means some time between March 21st and April 19th, as we express dates. The Jews did not keep Passover on the Sunday *after* the full moon, but on the very day itself of the full moon. The Christians, in order to avoid the coincidence of their Christian Easter and the Jewish Passover, have put their own feast purposely on the Sunday after. Now, is it difficult to ascertain the day of or the day before the spring full moon between A.D. 26 and 36 fell on Friday ? Let us enumerate possible dates.

Anno Domini 30, April 7th fell on a Friday. In that year the astronomical or real new moon occurred on March 22nd, at 8.24 p.m. The Jews, however, did not in the New Testament period ascertain the phases of the moon by astronomical calculations, but by very rough and ready methods. They cannot but have known that a cycle of the moon was about 29½ days, yet for the actual fixing of Passover they depended on first fixing the first of Nisan and its new moon by watching the sky with the naked eye. Now, before the eye can see the faintest glimmer of the shining segment of the new moon, the real new moon, i.e. the exact position of the moon between the earth and the sun, and, therefore, its turning its dark side completely to us, is already past by 24 to 36, or even 48 hours. In consequence, though it was astronomically new moon on March 22nd at 8.24 p.m., the Jews probably saw the new moon on March 24th. Now add 14 days to that, for Passover was not on the first but on the 14th of the new month ; it was not at new moon, but at *full* moon. Therefore it was Passover on Friday, April 7th, A.D. 30. This, therefore, is possibly the day on which our Lord died, *if* He died on Passover itself, not on the day before.

Now let us make a second guess. April 3rd, A.D. 33, was a Friday. The astronomical or real new moon that year was March 19th, 1.12 p.m. The Jews probably *saw* the new moon on March 21st, some time in the evening. Add 14 days to that and you realize that Friday, April 3rd, was the day before the Passover. This, therefore, is possibly the day on which our Lord died, *if* He died on the day *before* the Passover.

Now let us make a third guess. In A.D. 29, March 18th and April 15th were Fridays. Now could April 15th of that year possibly have been Passover for the Jews, or the day before ? It is just barely possible. Astronomical new moon that spring was April 2nd, at 7.55 p.m. Add 14 days and you get April 15th, a Saturday. But how did the Jews know of this astronomical new moon, considering that they only judged by the naked eye and no segment of the moon

can have been visible during the night of April 2nd? However, at least astronomically, Friday, April 15th, A.D. 29, was the day before the full moon, the technical date of the Jewish Passover. The likelihood of the Jews having actually observed the Pasch on the following day is very slight. It depends on whether the Jews by that time often abandoned their mere ocular observation of the moon phases for astronomically accurate calculations. Some scholars, indeed, maintain that they had already done so, but until A.D. 170 the use of astronomical calculations by the Jews is against all historical probability. Hence we may set this date aside as less likely.

There remains still a fourth possibility. March 18th was a Friday, and it was also the 14th day after an observable new moon, which that year fell astronomically on March 4th, at 5 a.m., and was therefore visible eleven hours afterwards, March 4th, 6 p.m., before sunset. Now many readers will at once set this day aside because March 18th is three days too early. Spring begins March 21st, and a full moon on March 18th is *not* the full moon *in spring*.

Perfectly true. But are we quite certain that the Jews knew it was only the 18th of March? But surely they must have known! If they did not know the day and the month in the year surely the whole problem is idle and a waste of time! Not so quick! The Jews knew, of course, the day of their *own* month, but did they know the day of the Roman or solar month? Our months are merely artificial divisions of the sun year, one-twelfth part of 365 days, and then, in order to get in the odd five days we add a day to January, March, May, July, August, October and December, and take away two days, and in a leap year only one day from February. The Jews, however, had *real* months, not artificial ones. The month was really the length of one cycle of the moon, i.e. 29½ days and some odd minutes. In consequence they were every year out by about 13 days with regard to the sun year. The Arabs, from whom the present-day Mohammedans still have their calendar, have stuck to this purely lunar cycle of 12 moon months, totally

disregarding the course of the seasons. The Jews, as the other Syrians, had found this total disregard of the seasons, and therefore of sowing and harvest time, too awkward in agriculture, and had adopted a rough and ready way to adjust their moon years to the solar or seasonal year. It was a clumsy but workable method. They inserted, not as we do, one day in a Leap year, but they inserted *a whole month*, so that some years had 13 months, for some years had two Marches in sequence. Adar ve Adar they called it. If this is done about twice in every five years the solar year will roughly be kept.

As a matter of fact, the Jews had the following rules for intercalating this extra March. First, they considered the corn harvest. The harvest had to be sufficiently advanced to make it possible according to the regulations of Leviticus xxiii, 11, to bring the first ears of corn to the priest on the day after the Passover. When they realized that this could not happen in a fortnight they intercalated a whole month and so obtained 44 days instead of 14 days to wait. Secondly, they considered the state of the fruit harvest. Thirdly, the sun had to have reached the point "tekufah," i.e. it had to stand in Aries. In consequence, though the Passover full moon was usually on or after the equinox, i.e. our March 21st, it is not at all impossible that with a very early ripening harvest of corn and fruit the Jewish authorities should have decided to celebrate the great feast on the full moon, which astronomically preceded the equinox by three days.

Hence it is quite possible that the Jews kept Passover Friday, March 18th, A.D. 29, and that this is the day on which our Lord died. Now, this is precisely the only date which has any support in tradition. Tertullian, Lactantius and Hippolytus tell us that our Lord died in the consulate of L. R. Geminus and C. R. Geminus, i.e. A.D. 29. This tradition in these three early Fathers is clearly mutually independent and therefore of some real value. Moreover, Tertullian tells us our Lord died in the month of March, so does Hippolytus, but he unfortunately says that it was

March 23rd, which was not a Friday. The same year, A.D. 29, is also attested by the fact that the destruction of Jerusalem is fixed by St. Chrysostom as over 40 years after the death of Christ, or by Clement of Alexandria and Origen as 42 years after the death of Christ, which brings us to a date previous to A.D. 30. Eusebius, relating the legend of Abgar, places the sending of St. Thaddeus by our Lord to Edessa in the year of the Greeks 340, which is our year A.D. 28–29, Sept.–Sept. St. Hippolytus says 206 years have passed from the 13th year of the Emperor Severus and the death of Christ. This again brings us to A.D. 29. Lastly, the Fasti Consulares of A.D. 354 fix the death of Christ in the year 782 of the building of the city, which is our year A.D. 29.

All these witnesses make it extremely likely that the real year is A.D. 29, and if so we must choose between March 18th and April 15th, both days being full moon that year. The only serious doubt arises from the possibility of the year A.D. 30 instead of A.D. 29, the chronological data not always being so precise as to exclude the possible divergence of one year. The year A.D. 33 has no chance of being correct, for then our Lord would have been 35 at least at His baptism, which is difficult to reconcile with Luke iii, 23, and the first Pasch of our Lord's public life would not have been 46 after the Herodian Restoration of the Temple, hence this would contradict John ii, 20.

We are now come to a further and apparently insoluble question: Did our Lord die on the day itself of the Jewish Passover or the day before it? A question on which the greatest scholars are divided we shall not presume to settle, but it is at least of interest to realize what the difficulty really is.

We must keep well in mind that for a Jew the day ends with sunset. Our division by what we call 12 midnight was not used by them. It is, of course, purely arbitrary, it is just convenient because it happens when most people are asleep and when they rise they find a new day has come. The Jews had a more obvious division: the day ended with sunset. The Jew of to-day begins the Sabbath on what we

call Friday evening at the precise moment when the disc of the sun has disappeared from the horizon. In this northern climate he keeps calendars to tell him precisely the moment when Friday is over and when the sacred Saturday, the Sabbath, begins. This is true also of his feast days. Passover, his Easter, began on what we would call the evening before, or what we Catholics still call "the First Vespers." The Catholic Church has actually kept Jewish ways in her liturgy.

Our Blessed Lord died at 3 o'clock p.m. on Friday, therefore the question is: Was the Jewish Passover that year from Thursday sunset to Friday sunset, or from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset? In the first case our Lord actually ate the Paschal Lamb previous to the institution of the Mass on Thursday evening, and He actually died on the Jewish Passover day, which that year immediately preceded the ordinary Sabbath. In the second our Lord did not eat the Paschal Lamb previous to the institution of the Mass on Thursday evening and He did not die on the Jewish Passover day itself, but about three hours before it, while they were slaying the Paschal Lamb in preparation for eating it that evening, which evening that year was both Passover and Sabbath together.

On this question at first sight the three Synoptics, that is Matthew, Mark and Luke, seem to contradict St. John. St. John seems to say that Christ died the day before the Passover; Matthew, Mark and Luke that He died on Passover day itself. It is easy enough to say: Somebody made a mistake, that's all! We Catholics can allow no "mistakes" in the inspired Word of God. Even from a purely historical standpoint it is extremely unlikely that St. John *really* contradicts the other three Evangelists. The difference in date between the Gospels is too little, and all four Evangelists are too close on the facts, and the Christian community was too interested and vigilant, and still too Jewish in its membership, to have really erred or allowed an error on this matter. Both Faith and history are simply concerned how to reconcile these four authorities.

Some argue this way:

We can take it for granted that the first and obvious meaning of Matthew, Mark and Luke must be kept, so that Christ died on the Jewish Passover, and we must somehow reconcile St. John's words with this fact.

The most difficult text undoubtedly is John xviii, 8. The Jews leading Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate in the morning "went not into the hall, that they might not be defiled but that they might eat the Pasch." On Friday morning, therefore, they had not yet eaten the Paschal Lamb. Now the Paschal Lamb had to be eaten between sunset and sunrise on their Passover feast. Hence Passover was still to come. Friday was the day *before* the feast. The difficulty *seems* insurmountable! Not so. First: "Eating the Pasch" in this sentence *cannot* mean eating the Paschal Lamb. The Jews feared legal pollution by entering a pagan's house. Now, such legal pollution only lasted till sunset. As the Paschal Lamb was to be eaten *after* sunset, it did not matter in the very least whether they went into Pilate's house or not; they could have eaten the Paschal Lamb in any case. Their fear of pollution must have been caused because they had to be legally pure for the eating of something before the evening; this could not be the Paschal Lamb, which could never be eaten after sunrise. Second: Eating the Pasch must be understood in a broad sense of eating the thankofferings in the afternoon of the feast of the Unleavened Breads, the so-called Chagiga. Such broad use of the word "Pasch" is clear from St. John himself (ch. ii. 13, xviii, 39) and also Josephus, *Ant.*, xiv. 2, where Pasch means the whole seven days of the solemnity. The usual phrase, moreover, for the ceremonies relating to the Lamb is "slaying," or "preparing," or "sacrificing" the Pasch, not eating the Pasch.

Then there are the difficulties with two other texts of St. John: xix. 14 speaks of "the parasceve of the Pasch." Now parasceve is the Greek word for preparation. Hence it was the preparation day, not the day itself of the Passover. To this others answer that the Greek word "the prepara-

tion" was a standing term for every and any Friday, because it always preceded the Sabbath. "Preparation day" simply means Friday. Hence we must translate: it was Friday of Passover week.

Again, John xix, 31 says of the day after our Lord's death that it was a *great* Sabbath. The only natural reason for this expression is that it coincided that year with Passover. To this others answer that there are other possible explanations. Possibly: because on that day, the day after Passover, the first ears of corn were offered in the temple; or because it was the Sabbath in Easter week; or because it succeeded Passover, a holiday on which abstinence of work was not so severe, or for any other reason we do not know. In any case, it need not be because it coincided with Passover.

Other scholars argue in a directly opposite direction. St. John's text, they say, is too clear, therefore SS. Matthew, Mark and Luke must be made to agree with it. First of all: with the sole exception of the story of the Last Supper, Matthew, Mark and Luke actually support St. John's contention that our Lord died the day *before* the Jewish Passover.

Notice, first, that according to Matthew, Mark and Luke, Simon of Cyrene, obviously a Jew, came from the country; i.e. he came from his farm or plot of land, and returning thus from his work to town, he met Jesus and was forced to carry the Cross. But if it was Passover, on which all servile work was forbidden, how could a man be returning from his work?

Notice, secondly, that Barabbas was released according to Jewish custom for the Passover. Surely it is unreasonable to suppose that he was released after the central solemnity of Passover was passed. It would be like releasing a man for Christmas on Boxing Day! Barabbas must have been released before the eating of the Paschal Lamb, not the morning after it!

Notice, thirdly, that the high priests and elders and a number of Jews must have been closely occupied with the

condemnation of Jesus from Thursday evening to Friday midday, and that on the greatest and most solemn day of all the year! This would seem as unlikely as a sitting of a high court of justice in England on Christmas evening! Pilate, it is true, was a heathen; Passover did not concern him. The people who put Christ to death were not scrupulous, it is true, but there were surely outward rules of decorum and decency to be observed, which they could not afford to set aside. The arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane and His conveyance to Annas and Caiaphas was done by Jews, who had to eat the Paschal Lamb, so had all the members of the Sanhedrin. It was simply *the* great religious act of the Jewish year. They could not have omitted it. For a Jew it was almost as much as his life was worth to do so in Jerusalem. Yet if Christ died on Passover day scores of people were busy with His arrest and condemnation when normally they would have been in the bosom of their families. This strange anomaly is avoided if we grant that Christ died the day *before* the Passover.

Once again. On a Jewish holiday no work was allowed except the preparation of food. Now, we read in St. Mark that Joseph of Arimathea bought a shroud to wrap our Lord's body in. We read in St. Luke that the women prepared ointments and sweet spices for our Lord's burial. As good Jewish women they stopped their preparations punctually at the moment of sunset on Friday evening, for then the Jewish Sabbath began. This was the reason why they had to wait till Sunday morning and they came the first possible moment—sunrise after the Sabbath. Now, if the day our Lord died was Passover, did Joseph find the shops open to buy the shroud? Did the women, who so scrupulously observed the Sabbath, go against their conscience in preparing the ointments and sweet spices?

Now, that the Jerusalem shops were open is also taken for granted by St. John, who tells us that when Christ spoke to Judas before he left the upper room the disciples thought He said: "Buy what is necessary for us on the day of the feast." Surely they could no more have thought

that than a Londoner would think of sending someone out on Christmas Day to buy what is necessary for the dinner. So far so good. Matthew, Mark and Luke are in full harmony with St. John : Christ died the day *before* the Passover. There remains the real difficulty.

According to the three Evangelists the Last Supper took place on Passover evening and was itself nothing else but the Passover festal meal, after which Christ instituted the Blessed Sacrament. We read that it happened " on the first day of the Unleavened Bread, when they slew the Pasch." This surely is definite. The Jews were forbidden to eat leavened bread the seven days of the Paschal solemnity, and the first day of the seven is nothing else but the day of Passover itself, when they ate the Paschal Lamb.

At first it would seem so, but let us look at the words a little more closely. As a matter of fact, " the day of the Unleavened Bread, when they slew the Pasch," would already have been as plain a designation as possible, i.e. the day when the people eat the Mazzoth or the Unleavened Breads together with the Paschal Lamb at the Paschal meal. Of course, they eat them throughout the whole following week, because they are forbidden to eat any other bread, but there is only *one* occasion when they are *bound* to eat them, that is with the flesh of the Paschal Lamb. Now, why did the Evangelist use the superfluous and tautological expression : " *the first day* of the Azymes when they slew the Pasch " ? The very superabundance of the words creates suspicion. Must we not translate : " the day preceding " or " the day before " instead of " the first day of " ? Now, such a translation of *prōtēi* in the Greek is quite possible. To be " first of someone " means in Greek to be " before someone." The Baptist said of our Lord : " He was first of me," meaning thereby obviously " He was before me." Our Lord said to the Apostles : " The world has hated Me first of you," meaning in English, " before you." There are a good number of examples of such use of " first " in classical Greek authors and in papyri of second and third centuries. Hence we must translate : " the day

that was first of the Azymes" or "the day before the Azymes."

It is remarkable that Aramaic, the native language of St. Mark and St. Matthew and the other Apostles and no doubt the language of the Gospel story before it was in a Greek version, also has this peculiarity: *Kamma* can mean both "first of" and "previous to."

Granted, however, that this translation is possible, there remains, independently altogether of this expression, the almost irresistible impression that the meal at the Last Supper was really the Paschal meal. "With great desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you," said our Lord Himself. The upper room was lent by the owner to Christ and His disciples for the precise purpose of eating the Passover. Our Lord sent out his Apostles to prepare the Passover, and they prepared it. It is exceedingly difficult to evade the force of the plain Gospel text. Some scholars none the less have tried to do so. They are mostly rationalistic and non-Catholic, but some are Catholic, though very few. In this country Prof. Box has learnedly defended the opinion that the Eucharistic Supper was not the Paschal meal, but the *Kiddush*, the hallowing of wine and bread on Sabbath and festal evenings. Even Père Lagrange thinks that we must seriously consider the possibility of the Last Supper not having been the Paschal meal.

However this be, the vast majority of scholars have always held and do now hold the opposite, and the opinion that our Lord did not celebrate the Passover is so novel and as yet so doubtfully supported that at least in this article we will not further enlarge upon it.

On the supposition, then, that the Eucharist succeeded the Passover, we ask how can we suppose that our Lord kept the Paschal feast the day before the Jews did? Some simply say that Christ on His own authority anticipated the day. Nobody doubts Christ's authority, of course, but why should He have used it? What need or reason was there of celebrating the Passover before He died? His Apostles must have been intensely amazed at this strange

anticipation. Christ does not explain, the Gospels betray nothing unwonted. If Christ and His disciples were the only party in Jerusalem who secretly and privately kept Passover, surely the Gospels would give some indication of it. In itself it seems the height of improbability.

Some, in consequence, say that the Jews kept Passover on the wrong day, a day too late, but Christ kept it on the correct date. The Jews transgressed their own law, say some early Fathers. But is it likely that Christ should have corrected some astronomical mistake in the calculation of Easter? Christ came to teach us how to go to heaven, not how the heavens go. Would Christ have troubled about a mistake in the Jewish calendar?

To which some scholars answer: It was no mistake, it was deliberate. Christ corrected their deliberate breaking of the law. The authorities, so it is said, objected to the Passover day falling on a Friday, because it was inconvenient to have two days of rest: Passover and Sabbath following one another. Hence, by manipulating the calendar they saw to it that Passover never should fall on a Friday. They invented the so-called *Badu* rule.

Now, even if this were so, there remains—at least to our mind—the extreme unlikelihood of Christ's troubling to rectify trickery by the public authorities with the calendar and keeping Passover in isolation with His disciples in protest. And that only a few hours before the Jewish law should for ever pass away by His own death on the Cross! Moreover, it is almost demonstrably certain that this *Badu* rule was not in force in the days of Christ. The Mishna distinctly supposes that Passover *can* fall on a Friday.

There remains an explanation which, though not proven, is very ingenious and seems natural in the circumstances. In our Lord's day there was a dispute about the lawfulness of roasting the Paschal Lamb after sunset on Friday. The Sabbath rest most strictly forbade the lighting of any fire and the preparation of any food. The question was: Could the Passover celebration override the Sabbath law? Hillel had decided that it could, but this decision was not

yet officially adopted. In our Lord's day, when Passover fell on Saturday, it was still regarded as unlawful to roast and prepare the Passover Lamb after sunset on Friday, because the Sabbath had then begun. In consequence the Lamb was slain, offered and roasted on the Thursday evening, but the eating of it took place at the proper time, viz. on the Friday after sunset, for there was no commandment forbidding eating on the Sabbath. So at least acted the high priests and their entourage who were Sadducees. The Pharisees, and with them the majority of the people, however, argued in a different way. The Paschal Lamb had to be eaten *on the same day* that it was slain and offered. Hence, as it was slain and offered on Thursday, on Thursday it had to be solemnly eaten at the ceremonial Paschal meal. Our Lord and His disciples followed this custom, not because they wanted to imitate the Pharisees, but because they conformed to the ways of the bulk of the people.

Thus Chwolson, a Lithuanian Jew, converted to Christianity, seems to have given a satisfactory solution to the difficulty. St. John is perfectly right in saying that our Lord died the day before the Passover, and that the high priests wanted to eat the Paschal Lamb that evening; the three Evangelists were perfectly right in implying that Thursday evening and Friday till sunset was a Jewish working day, and they were also right in implying that Christ ate the Passover that very Thursday night. It is a splendid solution, *if it could be proven*, but it remains a guess. We know through the Hillel and Shammai disputes that the Jewish world at the time was much troubled about the conflict between Passover rites and Sabbath rest, but that they adopted the above solution we may suppose but cannot prove.

If the calendar trick to keep Passover from the Friday already existed in our Lord's day, and if the Friday of our Lord's death was *real* Passover, whereas Saturday was only *official* Passover, then we have the additional satisfaction of knowing that our Lord kept the Paschal meal at the

correct time according to the Old Testament prescriptions. This, however, would be due not to His desire to correct the official calendar, a procedure which would have caused needless consternation, but to His conforming to the custom of the bulk of the people, who ate the Lamb on Thursday evening, not because they understood anything of the *Badu* trick, but because they ate the Lamb on the day it was slain.

We conclude :

1. If Holy Saturday was the really correct astronomical Passover, then it was no doubt Saturday, April 16th, A.D. 29, and if our Lord died the day before it He died on April 15th, A.D. 29.

2. If Good Friday was Jewish Passover, not by astronomical calculation, but by counting 14 days from the first visible new moon, and if our Lord died on the Jewish Passover itself, it must have been April 7th, A.D.30.

3. If Holy Saturday was Jewish Passover, not astronomically, but by observation, and if our Lord died before the Passover, it must have been April 3rd, A.D. 33.

4. If Good Friday was the eve of Passover by miscalculation of a whole lunar month—the extra month not being inserted that year because of the advanced state of the harvest—and if our Lord died the day before the Passover, He must have died on March 18th, A.D. 29.

The year 33 is for several reasons less likely. There remain as probable dates A.D. 30 and 29, and therefore March 18th, April 7th or April 15th. Historical tradition seems to favour March, A.D. 29.

Certainty at present is impossible. If, in the future, Easter were placed on the first Sunday in April, Christians would gain, for it would occur nearer the actual date than it often does with our present movable day.

II

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

We have all from childhood repeated in the Apostles' Creed: "From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead." Ever since the middle of the second century Christians have repeated these precise words and in all likelihood they recited them towards the end of the first, if not during the lifetime of the Apostles. What wonder, since according to the Acts of the Apostles, written about A.D. 62, the angels on Christ's Ascension day said to His disciples: "Men of Galilee! This Jesus, taken up from you into heaven, shall thus come again even as you saw Him go up into heaven"? What wonder, since according to the Gospels, Jesus Himself claimed that the Father had given all judgment into His hands, and that He, as Son of Man, was to judge all men according to their works? What wonder that St. Paul wrote to the first believers: "Let us live soberly and justly and piously in this world, waiting for the blessed hope and the coming of the glory of the great God and Our Saviour Jesus Christ"? If in the Apostles' Creed we distinguish between "the living and the dead" and not merely say "all men," it is a relic of those days, when, in the hearts of the faithful, there was so vivid an expectation that Christ might still return during their lifetime, that they felt the need to proclaim that whether at His coming one would be alive or dead He was to be the Judge alike of all. In St. Paul's day the faithful anxiously exercised their minds whether it would make any difference, if a man was in this world or the next on that blessed day. St. Paul and the Apostles set their minds at rest: Christ was to come to judge the living and the dead alike.

Let us here consider a question which for Christians is no

question at all, but which, alas, to non-Christians is a point of debate, often brought forward in recent times. Did Christ Himself mistakenly believe His own return would come immediately after His death, and not after twenty centuries and more? And did not the Apostles teach His return during the lifetime of the first believers? Did not all Christianity thus begin with one huge error?

For us the question does not exist. Christ as God knew everything, and as man, though He certainly did not know everything, for His human mind was finite, not infinite, He certainly could not err, and if Christ imagined He would return within, say, a score of years, or, as it is said, within a few days, or weeks, or months, He erred most grievously indeed. For the sake of others, however, let us consider the question. But first of all we must postulate the reliability of the Gospel-text relating Christ's words. If we cannot rely on the Gospels giving us at least the substance and correct sense of what Our Lord said, there is in reality no question to be answered. If we do not know what Our Lord said and did, it is idle to speculate as to what He thought or meant. Strange but true, a great number of books, nay, almost all, which modernists have written on this subject, sin in this respect. It is weariness and loss of time to read them; it was waste of paper to print them; for if no one knows or can know precisely what Jesus said or did, it is folly to argue about His thoughts. How many shelves of our libraries would be happily empty if people had realised this!

Taking Christ's sayings then, as we find them, there are undoubtedly some which at first sight suggest that the Speaker expected His return within the immediate future; but there are others which suggest that a long indefinite time has to elapse before His coming again; and there are, furthermore, sayings which disclaim any knowledge of the time of that return.

Now, we bar the easy escape that Christ contradicted Himself. First because the character portrayed in the Gospels is one of such intellectual strength and mental

sanity that self-contradiction must not be assumed but rigorously proved. Secondly: Imagine even that Christ had contradicted Himself, it cannot have been the intention of Christ's four biographers in so short a compass to assert such contradiction. They wrote the Gospels for the furtherance of Christ's cause, and to display their Divine Hero's self-contradictions would be the height of folly. If, then, they chose these sayings of His for quotation, it is because they had in their mind a way to reconcile them. Their attitude of mind is more likely than any other to show us the true solution of the problem.

But, it has been pleaded, excluding gross self-contradiction, cannot we assume a gradual development in the mind of Christ, a gradual change from one view to another? No, for we have no fixed point whatever for such progress. First, because the chronology or time sequence of these sayings is completely uncertain. Secondly, because, speaking in the abstract, such imaginary development may have proceeded from any point in any direction: from certainty of immediate return to certainty of long distant return, or to complete uncertainty about the date of return; or, from complete uncertainty about the date of return, to certainty of distant return; and, thirdly, to certainty of immediate return; or, once more, from certainty of long distant return, to certainty of immediate return, or to uncertainty of date of return. And so we can ring the changes. Considering that on this supposition we have only to deal with Christ's imaginations, to which no objective reality corresponded, any sequence of such imaginations would be a psychological problem which could never be solved owing to the apparent uniqueness of the case and the scantiness of the data. After reading some very plausible descriptions of the possible development of the mind of Christ in this matter, the reader wearily rises with the words: It may have been so, and it may have been quite different. It is a mere play of fancy, nothing else.

Now to the texts themselves. By far the longest passage is the so-called little Apocalypse reported by SS. Matthew,

Mark and Luke. When Our Lord had completed His great denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites, He finally left the Temple never to return. "Behold your house is left unto you desolate," had been His ominous words. As He was departing from the Temple His own disciples, terrified by their Master's prophecy, pointed out with the pride of Jews the glory of the house of God, its gigantic blocks of stone and the magnificence of its construction. But Jesus had said unto them: "Do ye see all these things? Amen, I say unto you, there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." For a while the disciples seem to have been struck dumb by the greatness of the calamity foretold, but when Our Lord had reached the summit of the Mount of Olives four of them, Peter, James, John and Andrew, asked Him privately: Tell us when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the world? According to St. Matthew, then, three questions are asked: When shall the Temple be destroyed, when shall Christ come, when shall be the end of the world? Christ sitting on the Mount of Olives gives a long answer, abbreviated in fifty verses in St. Matthew xxiv. On first reading, Christ's words are seemingly in confusion. Some clearly refer to the fall of Jerusalem; "pray that your flight may not be in winter" is advice that can only refer to flight from the city before its destruction. It cannot refer to the Second coming at the end of the world, from which no one can flee, and when it does not matter whether it is winter or summer. Other sentences quite as clearly refer to Christ's coming on the clouds of heaven at the end of time. The greater part of the discourse is devoted to warning the disciples to be on the watch, not to believe anyone who points out Christ here or there, or in some secret place, for when Christ *does* come, His return will be as unmistakable as lightning across the sky. "Of that day no one knoweth, not even the Son, but the Father alone." The main outline of Christ's thoughts is not really in doubt. The destruction of the Temple will take place before that generation shall pass away. As a matter of fact it came forty years after-

wards. It will be preceded by sufficient signs so that "those who are in Judea should flee into the mountains." Of the time of Christ's Second coming and the end of the world nothing can be said, for only the Father knows, even Christ does not know, but it shall be preceded by signs in the heavens and in all nature, and His coming shall be so plain that no doubt shall be possible.

Although the outline is clear, it is almost impossible to say with certainty throughout which words refer to the fall of Jerusalem, and which to the end of the world. Scores of commentators have worked on the text, but there never has been, nor is there ever likely to be, unanimity as to where precisely to draw the lines of division.

The state of the text is, after all, not unnatural. It is rather a guarantee for its genuineness. When Peter, James, John and Andrew heard Christ's words, they certainly did not fully understand. Even after the Resurrection they asked once more: "Lord, wilt Thou about this time restore the Kingdom of Israel," and had to be told again that it was not theirs to know the times and moments which the Father held in His own power. Even after Pentecost day, when the Holy Spirit had led them into all truth about Christ's teaching, they knew no more about the mysteries of the future, the knowledge of which had been so steadfastly and emphatically refused to them. Some people, impatient with the obscurity of the text, have asserted that Our Blessed Lord Himself thought that His return would immediately follow His death and the destruction of Jerusalem would only be an episode in that return. This solution is, however, quite untenable. There is no text which implies such a thought on Our Lord's part.

Let us take this section of St. Matthew's report: "This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations and then the end shall come," or these words in St. Luke: "there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people, and they shall fall by the edge of the sword and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gen-

tiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." It is clear that Our Lord indicates some long though indefinite time after the destruction of Jerusalem, which St. Luke calls "The times of the Gentiles." There is no hint whatever that " the times of the Gentiles " shall be shorter in duration than the times of the children of Abraham, and from the covenant with Abraham to Christ is at least 2,000 years. During these " times of the Gentiles," Israel shall be scattered throughout the world and Christ's Gospel be preached unto all nations. It must be noted that for Christ these times are not merely a short season of fiendish triumph of God's devilish foes over God's chosen people, Israel. Christ's outlook is totally different from that of contemporary Jewry. Not that Christ approves of the cruelty of the destroyers of Jerusalem and the oppressors of His people, but, as a number of parables again and again emphasise: the kingdom of God shall be taken away from Israel by God's own decree, and by that same divine decree be transferred to the Gentiles. The four disciples, who told what Christ had said to them on Mount Olivet, sufficiently remembered a number of sentences which fell from His lips. They sufficiently indicated the coming destruction of Jerusalem, and, as a matter of fact, Christ's warning made the Christians leave the city before its fall in A.D. 70. They faithfully repeated even Christ's remarkable statement that no man, no angel, not even the Son of Man, knew the time of His return. They well remembered His warnings that they should watch. None the less they did not remember the sequence of a long discourse, and the Evangelists, who obtained the information from one or more of the four disciples present, could not know more than their informants. Thus they gave us a number of sayings of Christ, faithful and true in themselves, but not in due sequence or seeming not to be in sequence because they contain large lacunae. Inspiration prevents all error, but inspiration does not necessarily supply information that is lacking. Inspiration is not revelation. It is even possible that St. Matthew and St. Mark give us two distinct discourses mixed together. If one compares them with St.

Luke's account, and with St. Luke's discourse on the Coming of Christ in chapter XVII, it is hard to resist the impression that the first two Evangelists combine both. It is universally acknowledged that elsewhere St. Matthew combines a number of sayings of Christ uttered on different occasions. Neither St. Matthew nor the other Evangelists vouch for the sayings of Christ having actually followed in a precise given sequence. We must never forget that the Evangelists mostly give us the shortest possible *résumé* of Our Lord's discourse, not guaranteeing the *ipsissima verba* on all occasions.

There remains, however, in the eyes of some, the great difficulty that somehow the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Coming is combined as if they were one event.

Yet many of Our Lord's words imply a delay between the two :

" When they persecute you in one city, flee to another. Amen I say unto you, you shall not finish the cities of Israel until the Son of Man come " (Matt. x, 23). " Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman (Mary Magdalene) hath done shall be spoken of for a remembrance of her " (Matt. xxvi, 13). " To Me is given all authority in heaven and on earth, therefore go ye and teach all nations . . . and I shall be with you till the consummation of the world " [literally : the completion of the Age or Aeon]. " Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature ; whosoever believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." " Ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth." It is evident from these texts that Christ foresaw the evangelisation of the whole world, and it would need very strong texts indeed to make us believe that Christ expected this evangelisation to be completed within the lifetime of His hearers. It is evidently not conceived as a casual proclamation from place to place, but as involving a real conversion of a multitude of the Gentile world, and the transference of the divine

kingdom from Ancient Israel to the Gentiles. After the significant parable of the husbandmen who killed the son and cast him out of the vineyard, Christ said : " The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." " Many shall come from the East and the West and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth." This conversion of the Gentiles had been pictured in glowing terms by Isaias the Prophet, and Christ clearly adopts the ancient vision to the full.

It is therefore against reason to suppose that " the completion of the age " or the consummation of the world, as we translate, was in Christ's mind a matter of some twenty or thirty years only. After Jerusalem's fall the Jews shall be led captive into all nations ; how is this to happen, if Christ thought of Himself as returning on the clouds of heaven immediately after His death, or at best immediately after the fall of the ancient Jewish city ?

Moreover, there are a great number of sayings of Our Lord which imply a long delay before His coming again. " As in the days of Noe, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the Flood they were eating and drinking and marrying and giving in marriage, even till the day when Noe entered into the Ark, and they knew not till the flood came and took them all away, so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be . . . watch ye therefore because ye know not what hour your Lord will come. If the goodman of the house knew at what hour the thief would come, he would certainly watch, wherefore be ye also ready because at what hour you know not the Son of Man will come." " If that evil servant shall say in his heart : My lord is long a-coming, and shall begin to strike his fellow-servants and shall eat and drink with drunkards, the lord of that servant shall come in a day that he expecteth not, and at the hour he knoweth not." Then follows the parable of the Ten Virgins, " the bridegroom tarrying they all slumbered and slept." The foolish virgins came at last, " saying :

Lord, Lord, open to us. But He answering said: Amen I say unto you, I know you not. Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not the day, nor the hour. For even as a man going into a far country, called his servants "—here follows the parable of the talents—" after a long time the lord of these servants came and reckoned with them." This return refers to the time " when the Son of Man shall come in His majesty and all His angels with Him." Texts could be multiplied, but these must suffice to make the reader realise that Christ did not mislead His hearers with the assertion of His speedy return. Nothing is more certain than that Christ emphatically disclaimed to give any revelation on this subject. " Of that day no one knoweth, not the angels, nay, not even the Son, if it were not for the Father." This denial is difficult enough for us to understand, difficult to see in what sense that day was withdrawn from the human knowledge of Christ, but, whatever the theological explanation, it is at least perfectly plain that Christ did in no way indicate when He was to return. Even after His Resurrection when the Apostles, obsessed with the idea of a catastrophic parousia of the Messias to crush the enemies of Jerusalem, said: Lord, wilt Thou in this time restore the kingdom of Israel, Christ answered briefly and decisively: " It is not yours to know!" How strange if He had thrown out continual hints when it would be!

What, then, are the texts which have persuaded some people of Christ's mistaken expectation in this matter? " Amen, I say unto you, there are some of them that here stand by, who shall in no-wise taste death, till they see the Kingdom of God come with power " (Mark ix, 1). If we take the ending of the text as given in St. Matthew, we read: " till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom," or in St. Luke: " till they see the kingdom of God." Here, so it is said, it is plain that Christ looks forward to His coming within the lifetime of at least some of those then living.

We answer that the whole question depends on what is meant by this coming of the kingdom in power and the coming of the Son of Man in His kingdom. The word king-

dom occurs some sixty times in the Gospel of St. Matthew, as many in St. Luke, and thirty times in St. Mark; it cannot be so difficult to ascertain its meaning. It usually means, not a kingdom away from this earth, a kingdom in the skies, a kingdom at the end of time, God's final kingdom after the day of judgment, the kingdom where Christ in His unveiled glory shall reign amongst the angels and saints, but the kingdom of truth and grace, which He came to found on earth, the Catholic Church. There are a score of parables to show this. The kingdom is like to ten virgins, five of whom were foolish and five wise, but in heaven above there are no fools, only on this earth. The kingdom is like unto a field in which the wheat and tares are sown, but Christ Himself explained: "the field is this world." The kingdom is like unto a net cast into the sea, catching good fishes and bad, but such a catch is only possible here upon earth. The kingdom is like unto servants who are trafficking with their talents, again only possible here upon earth. Thus we might go through all the parables, showing that Christ's kingdom is a human, though divine, kingdom on this earth in which Christ reigns, long before He comes again upon the clouds of heaven. To Peter He gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that what Peter loosed on earth might be loosed also in heaven. When Christ and His Apostles went into every village and hamlet and preached "the Gospel of the kingdom," it is nowhere suggested that this kingdom must begin with a miraculous return of Christ on the clouds. Christ distinctly says that the kingdom of God is already come upon them. It is this reign of righteousness and truth, this new covenant of God with His people, it is the realm of forgiveness of sin and peace with God that is being inaugurated.

It is clear that "the coming of the Son of Man in His kingdom with power" means the evident and triumphant establishment of the Catholic Church of Christ, when He truly reigns in the hearts of millions scattered throughout the world, when God has vindicated the glory of His Son by the triumphant success of His cause and the discomfiture of

His enemies. This kingdom of Christ was set forth in glory on Easter-day, at the Ascension, and more fully on Pentecost-day, when the Spirit of Truth inaugurated the reign of Christ over the hearts of men; when soon, within one generation, like an all-devouring flame, the name of Jesus spread to the ends of the earth. Then Jewry for a time still obscured the triumph of Christ, but in the year A.D. 70 Jerusalem, the city of the ancient Covenant, was destroyed, and the people of Israel scattered to the four winds of heaven, the Old Testament was visibly brought to an end and the New visibly established. It was God's vindication of Him who was crucified on Calvary and the rejection of those who had rejected their Messias. The new order of things was ushered in: the Son of Man was coming in His kingdom in power.

Christ spoke to Jews, to whom the triumph of Jesus of Nazareth and His cause was unthinkable. Unthinkable the coming of the kingdom of the Messias as He understood it, and the passing away of the glory of Jerusalem and its Temple and all its pomp, the abolition of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New, the rejection of the Jewish people and the call of the Gentiles. A triumph through the apparent failure of His death, a triumph in which no one could share unless he was willing to take up his cross and follow Him, was unthinkable. Christ said: "Amen, amen. I say unto you, some of those here standing shall not die till they see Me coming in glory into My kingdom." Who is there who can say that He has not kept His word? Within fifty years of His uttering these words His name was loved and adored from far-away Spain to Persia. Thousands had gladly died for the glory of His name in mighty Rome, whereas Jerusalem and Ancient Jewry were no more; Christ, sitting at the right hand of His Father, had poured out the Holy Ghost, and those that had carried their cross after Him He had received at death and brought to everlasting glory. Verily He had come into His kingdom, and it is only a perverted mentality that can say that He had expected meanwhile to come upon the clouds of heaven and

was disappointed of His hope; that the whole of Christianity was the bitter disillusionment of His mistaken followers, who knew that their Master had promised to return within their lifetime, but who had not kept His promise.

St. Paul knew better, when some twenty-three years after the Resurrection he wrote to the Thessalonians: "We beseech you, brethren, regarding the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye be not easily moved in your mind nor terrified, as if the day of the Lord were at hand. Let no one beguile you in any way!" It is pitiable that a misunderstanding which was exploded by the Apostles nineteen hundred years ago should be dished up again in the twentieth century to discredit Him whose kingdom has stood the test of ages and whose glory has been proclaimed throughout the world for sixty generations.

III

ABEL, ABRAHAM AND MELCHISEDEK

IN THE DAYS OF CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES

During the first fifty years of its existence Christianity was strongly Jewish in tone and speech. Not only were a great number, if not the majority, of its adherents during this period Jews in blood, but its leaders, the Apostles and first disciples, were almost all Jews from Palestine. Many of its faithful, though not Jews by race, came into first contact with Christianity through the synagogue, and as the Bible of the Jews passed over into Christian use even before the New Testament was written or extensively used, Jewish phraseology and Old Testament figures were naturally conspicuous in Christian public worship or private prayer.

This Jewish savour in early Christian expressions is an interesting object of research for the student of Apostolic times.

A remarkable instance of Jewish thought and speech in prayer is the following sentence in the Canon of the Roman Liturgy, when the priest, referring to the consecrated gifts upon the altar, prays thus to God :

> " Upon which vouchsafe to look with a propitious and serene countenance and to accept them, as Thou wert pleased to accept the gifts of Thy just servant Abel and the sacrifice of our Patriarch Abraham and that which Thy high priest Melchisedek offered to Thee, a holy sacrifice, an immaculate victim."

These words are of great liturgical antiquity. It is true that the final words : " a holy sacrifice, an immaculate victim," were added by Pope Leo the Great about the year

A.D. 450, but the prayer itself is at least a century older, for it was known to St. Ambrose and his contemporaries. In all likelihood it is much older still, as St. Cyprian, a hundred years before St. Ambrose, seems to allude to it.

In the short Canon of the *Paradosis Apostolike*, which gives us the Canon of Rome about A.D. 200, the prayer is not mentioned, but this, of course, does not prove its non-existence, it may well have existed by itself before its insertion in the Canon. The very term "puer," which obviously renders the greek παῖς, and which we translated "servant," for lack of a better word, but which also stands for "child," "boy," "son," "page," suggests high antiquity for the prayer.

No such reference to Abel, Abraham and Melchisedek or to any Old Testament sacrifices is known in Eastern liturgies; it is only found in the Western or Roman rites and those connected with it.

A word about the Sacrifice of Abel

St. Irenaeus in the IVth Book *Contra Haereses* (chs. 17 and 18) explains in detail and with emphasis that the Church in the Holy Eucharist offers up an acceptable sacrifice like unto that of Abel. Jews and heretics he likens unto Cain. The stress laid on this point is so great that the Eucharist must already have commonly been regarded as foreshadowed by Abel's sacrifice. As St. Irenaeus knew the generation that had known the Apostles, this brings the connection of Abel with the Eucharist to Apostolic times.

The account of Abel's sacrifice in the Book of Genesis, though in a sense it presupposes the righteousness of Abel, whose sacrifice Jehovah accepted, does in no way lay special stress on Abel's particular sanctity. In fact it does not mention it at all. It is Cain's story that is told, not Abel's.

Some early Jewish circles, so far from emphasising Abel's sanctity, embroidered a very secular story indeed on the Biblical narrative. Cain and Abel had each a twin sister, so the tale went. Cain fell in love with Abel's sister, and this gave rise to a feud between the brothers. According

to the later Mahommedan version of the Jewish legend, Adam proposed the test of the smoke of the sacrifice. In any case, the key-note of the story was not sought in some special holiness of Abel. Josephus, in the first century, still gives a very Pharisaic explanation of God's preference for Abel's sacrifice: "Cain brought the fruits of the earth and of his husbandry, but Abel brought milk and the first-fruits of his flocks; but God was more delighted with the latter oblation, when He was honoured with what grew naturally of its own accord, than He was with what was the invention of covetous man, and gotten by forcing the ground" (*Antiq.* I, 2, 1).

One would almost be inclined to see a polemic note in the words of the First Epistle of St. John (ch. iii, 12), which is practically contemporary with Josephus: "Cain was of the wicked one, and slew his brother; and why did he slay him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."

There can be no doubt that in most Jewish circles, in and before the first century, the righteousness of Abel and the greatness of his sacrifice was usually emphasised.

One of the earliest of Christian books, obviously written by a Jew, I mean the Epistle to the Hebrews, twice refers to Abel thus:

"Abel offered to God a sacrifice exceeding that of Cain, by which he obtained a testimony that he was just, God giving testimony to his gifts; and by it, he being dead yet speaketh" (ch. xi, 4).

"Ye are come to . . . Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament, and to the sprinkling of the blood, which speaketh better things than that of Abel (ch. xii, 24).

We gather from Christ's own lips the expression: "the blood of Abel the just" (Matt. xxiii, 35). These words occur in such immediate connection with His own coming death that the thought of referring to it in the Christian sacrifice would not be unnatural.

At the beginning of the Christian era the sacrifice of Abel had strongly roused the attention of Jewry. Theodotion,

a Jew of Ephesus, who re-translated the Hebrew scriptures into Greek in the second century, rendered the words which we translate " God had respect to Abel and his offerings," by God had respect to Abel and set his offerings on fire. He inserts the word ἐνεπύρισεν before " his offerings." Abel's sacrifice would therefore have been kindled by miraculous fire, as the sacrifice of Elias or Solomon. This certainly rests on an ancient Hebrew reading as it is found in Jewish authorities, and was also largely accepted by early Christian Fathers. It stands to reason that in some visible way God must have signified His acceptance and rejection of the sacrifices of the two brothers.

In the Book of Enoch, in a section written about 170 B.C., the soul of Abel is depicted in the Nether-world as the pattern of the suffering righteous, crying to God for vengeance until the seed of Cain shall be destroyed from the earth. The posterity of Cain became a standing expression for the wicked, and " to go the way of Cain " meant to lead a life of sin. On the other hand, the blood of Abel was thought of as unceasingly pleading for the just and for the final triumph of the good. It was this old Jewish commonplace which suggested to the inspired writer the magnificent sentence that the blood of Christ spoke better things than that of Abel. What place Abel occupied in early Jewish thought is shown by the quaint and often beautiful Jewish apocryphal book " The Testament of Abraham," in which Abel the Just is the great judge of the dead until Messianic times. In Messianic times the twelve tribes of Israel shall become the judges, and finally God Himself in person shall exercise judgment—a judgment which shall be perfect and cannot be reversed.

In the early centuries of Christianity there existed in Africa a sect of Abelites, who took Abel's righteousness and suffering meekness as their model, and as, according to their legend, Abel died childless, they, though married, lived in continence and adopted children instead of having children of their own. The sect cannot have had a purely Christian origin. Amongst Christians individuals have

sometimes, though married, lived in continence, but they surely would not have chosen Abel, but St. Joseph as their obvious pattern, as indeed such unions amongst Christians have been called Josephite marriages.

It is worthy of consideration that Jews have made the suggestion that the Jewish sect of the Essenes may be connected with this cult of Abel. In Egypt and Palestine in the first century there certainly existed what may be best described as Jewish monks. Though in Palestine marriage seems not to have been completely rejected by them, many of them were unmarried, and continence was highly esteemed. The Testament of Abraham, with its total omission of reference to the Law and legal precepts, was certainly not a Pharisaic production.

The highest exaltation of the figure of Abel is certainly to be found amongst the Mandaeans, a semi-Jewish and pagan sect, the origin of which dates from pre-Christian, or at least first century, times. This sect, which later became conspicuous for its veneration of St. John the Baptist and its abhorrence of Our Lord, raised Abel to a kind of emanation from the Deity, under the name of Hibil Ziva or Abel, the Holy One, "Ziva" meaning, "lightsome, shining," "illustrious," "sacred," "holy." For them Abel is a lightsome spirit—the highest in the divine hierarchy—the friend and saviour of men.

We do not for a moment wish to imply that these weird Jewish-gnostic dreams had anything to do with the insertion of Abel's name in the Mass; this would be absurd. They are only mentioned to bring out the extraordinary prominence of the figure of Abel in the first generations of Christianity, which make it natural that amongst all the acceptable sacrifices previous to Christ that of Abel, Abraham and Melchisedek should have been chosen, whereas the miraculous acceptance of Elias' sacrifice on Mount Carmel is not mentioned.

The Christian saw in Abel, Abraham and Melchisedek a foreshadowing of Christ, which, of course, the Jews did not do, but they had already under God's providence realized

Abel as the embodiment of Innocence, slain because of his innocence; they had already realized that Abel's blood, crying from earth to heaven, symbolized the cry of suffering righteousness for divine pity.

The Sacrifice of our father Abraham is, as no one doubts, that of his son Isaac. Jewish Midrash and Haggadah amply enlarged on the sublime story of Genesis and fully realized it as the greatest act of the greatest figure of the Old Testament, in consequence of which the Jews became God's covenanted people. Some of their fancies are beautiful, such as that the tears of the Angels at the sight of the child-victim fell from heaven and blinded the eyes of Isaac. The sacrifice of our father Abraham was in the very centre of Jewish religious conceptions. Moses and the law-giving on Sinai were important indeed in another sphere, but the merits of father Abraham, obtained chiefly by this supreme sacrifice, extended to all Jews for all time, and was the greatest homage ever given to God.

The Christians at once saw in this sacrifice an antecedent portrayal of the sacrifice on Calvary. The application of this figure does not directly occur in the New Testament, though the thought is brought very near: "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son" (John iii, 16). "To Abraham were given the promises and to his seed. He does not say and to his seeds, as if to many, but as to one; 'and to thy seed, which is Christ'" (Gal. iii, 16). It is, however, already to be found in the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians (c. 31) towards the end of the first century, in St. Melito in the middle and in St. Irenaeus towards the end of the second century. The Catacombs, early sarcophagi, gems and paintings of all sorts of early Christianity prove that hardly any Old Testament scene was more beloved than this. No doubt a Jew would especially welcome the representation in his new religion of what was greatest in his old one: the sacrifice of "our father Abraham."

The words "our father Abraham," though not impossible in the mouth of a Gentile Christian, would more naturally

come to the lips of a Jew by race than to those of a stranger. Gentile Christians would naturally remember the words of the Baptist in St. Luke: "Do not begin to say, We have Abraham for our father. For I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham." They would naturally remember the scorn which Christ in the Gospel of St. John cast upon those who pleaded Abraham as their father and did not do the works of Abraham. Christ then deliberately used the phrase "Abraham *your* father," though He might have said "*our* father." It is only natural, then, to think that the actual first author of the prayer in the Canon was a Jew, who, like St. Stephen, could say: "the God of glory appeared to *our* father Abraham," or like St. Paul, who could plead "the faith of *our* father Abraham."

In many ways most interesting to the scholar of early Christian times is the reference to Melchisedek.

Both East and West were unanimous in regarding the act of Melchisedek in offering bread and wine as a type of the Eucharist. Although no reference to Melchisedek is made in Eastern liturgies, the most ancient reference to Melchisedek's sacrifice occurs in an Eastern writer, Clement of Alexandria, writing about the year A.D. 200 (Strom. bk. ix, 24), and saying, as a thing naturally understood, that Melchisedek offered bread and wine εἰς τύπον εὐχαριστίας We may take it for granted that as the Church from sub-apostolic times has seen a foreshadowing of the Eucharist, in the famous text of the Prophet Malachy about a sacrifice and a clean oblation to be offered up in every place, so likewise from very early times she has seen in Melchisedek's offering a type of the Sacrifice of the Mass. Old Testament types, actually guaranteed by the New Testament, we know to be such with the certainty of faith, owing to our belief in the inspiration of Holy Scripture. The bearing of the Prophecy in Malachy being unhesitatingly asserted by the Church from the first century to the twentieth, does, I think, also come under an interpretation of Scripture to be held as of Catholic faith. With regard to the sacrifice of Melchisedek

one dares not assert so much. The matter is exceedingly complicated.

Let us examine the three passages in Holy Scripture in which Melchisedek is mentioned.

First, the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, where the story is first told; then the 109th Psalm, in which Christ is prophesied as priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedek; and lastly, the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which an elaborate parallel is drawn between the old Aaronic priesthood and the new priesthood of Christ foreshadowed by Melchisedek.

In Genesis we read that Abraham, on returning from the defeat of Chodorlahomor and his allies, was met by the king of Sodom:

> But Melchisedek, the King of Salem, brought out bread and wine, for he was priest of the Most High God, and he blessed him and said: Blessed be Abraham by the Most High God, maker of heaven and earth, and blessed be the Most High God, by whose protection the enemies are in thy hands. And he gave him tithes of all.

But the king of Sodom, who offered to leave the whole booty in Abraham's hands if he gave him the men he had captured, received a haughty rebuff from the Patriarch, who refused to retain a single thing lest the king of Sodom should boast of having enriched him.

Amongst non-Catholic scholars it is almost universally taken for granted that when we read that Melchisedek brought out bread and wine this merely means that he supplied Abraham's hungry and thirsty warriors with much-needed refreshment after a tiresome march. Even if this were the meaning and nothing else, Melchisedek, the prince of Salem, would still remain a striking symbol of Christ, the prince of peace and priest of the Most High, who feeds men with His Body and Blood under the appearance of bread and wine. It would then only be a symbol of the Mass as a banquet, a sacrament, but not as a sacrifice. It would be a fortuitous circumstance, apt to be used in pulpit elo-

quence in a merely adapted sense, and not really a foreshadowing of the Mass.

The Church, on the other hand, undoubtedly regards Melchisedek's action not merely as one of beneficence, but of sacrificial worship towards God.

This thought is often set aside by modern scholars. We submit, however, that they do so without reason, and that the ancient Jewish and Christian interpretation has a great deal in its favour.

It is not in dispute that the Hebrew words used are 'brought out bread and wine,' and that the words 'brought out,' etymologically and by themselves, do not necessarily mean 'he sacrificed or offered up.' On the other hand, if the idea had been that Melchisedek simply brought bread and wine for the refreshment of Abraham's men there was another, better Hebrew word available, the word הֵבִיא, HĒBI, not the word הֹיצִיא, HŌSI. The Hebrew says, literally, Melchisedek caused to go out bread and wine. If for the sake of English idiom we translate: "he brought out," we must never forget that the stress lies on the word "out." A thing previously within or inside was now brought without or outside. When the Authorized and Revised Version translate "Melchisedek brought *forth* bread and wine" they are really taking a liberty with the text; and when it is suggested that Melchisedek presented the bread and wine to Abraham, they go completely beyond the text, for this verb has never the meaning of presenting a gift. The Septuagint correctly translated: ἐξήνεγκε like אפיק of the Peshitto, "he brought it outside, or carried it without."

Now, why this strange term? Out of what coverings, or hiding places, or wrappings is this bread and wine supposed to be brought out? Why should such a supposed large quantity of bread and wine be in any way packed up or hidden from view? It is emphatically not the usual term of giving something to somebody.

It is natural to take the word in the obvious meaning of: to single out, to set apart, to lift out, to bring out by contrast and isolation. It would be a natural term for to set aside

and make sacred to God those items of food and drink which were sacrificed to Him. In the case of sacrificing living things the natural term would be slaying or slaughtering, in the case of inanimate things singling out or setting apart is a natural term for hallowing.

This suggestion is not a merely fanciful one. Already, in Cornelius A. Lapide, it was pointed out that the story of Gideon and the Angel in the Book of Judges contains the sentence: *hosethi minhathi*, "I bring out my oblation." This, from the context, clearly refers to a sacred ceremony, and *Minkah* is the technical term for a sacred oblation especially of flour or bread. We have then in the story of Gideon an almost exact parallel to the text in Genesis. Moreover, the story of the Angel who consumes Manoah's sacrifice by fire from heaven, and the story of Elias and the fire that devours the sacrifice on Mount Carmel, make it clear that the miraculous consumption of a sacrifice was a recognized sign of divine acceptance. Gideon, therefore, in saying *hosethi minhathi* did not wish to supply the Angel with provisions, but to set out and hallow his *minhatho*. It is remarkable that in Ethiopic MŌSĀT (from the same root as the Hebrew) is a term for an expiatory gift, rendering אשם asham, the Hebrew word for guilt offering, and MOSAAT renders כפרת kapporeth, or atonement.

It is surprising, likewise, that in Assyrian we find the sentence *ushesamma ana arba shari ittaka naka*—"I brought out and to the four winds offered a sacrifice."

In some instances (Num. xiv, 36; Deut. xxii, 14; 2 Kings xii, 12; xv, 20) the causative form of יצא yasa, construed with the preposition על al, upon, seems to have the meaning of the Arabic وصى wasa, to join, enjoin, command, impose, as if the verb were *ultimae he*, but this is hardly the case in the case of the Melchisedek passage.

We take it then that in itself the sentence may mean: Melchisedek consecrated, dedicated bread and wine.

Now, the context is directly against the idea of a supply of provisions brought out. Abraham, in his later answer to the king of Sodom, makes it absolutely clear that his

men have already taken their rations from the spoils of their enemies. They have already eaten their fill, not of Melchisedek's bread and wine, but of what they have looted from the foe. The picture of exhausted warriors, refreshed by Melchisedek's bounty, is a purely imaginary one. The battle is long over and past, the victorious army is amply provided, and not far from their homes. The context, therefore, does not suggest a supply of provisions, the context directly suggests some priestly action. The words are immediately followed by the sentence: "and he was priest of the most high God," well translated in the Latin *erat enim sacerdos*, "*for* he was priest"; the Hebrew particle "we" often introduces an explanatory cause. Melchisedek's priesthood explains his previous action of consecrating bread and wine to God; the subsequent blessing as such required no priest. We conclude, then, that the Church's use of this passage is justified by the text itself.

We come now to the discussion of Psalm 109, the famous *Dixit Dominus*, in which we read: "Juravit Dominus et non poenitebit eum, tu es sacerdos secundum ordinem Melchisedek." Our Lord, in the Gospel, had called attention to the first words: "The Lord saith unto my Lord," by asking, "if the Messias is David's Son, how then does he call him Lord?" Both Christ and His adversaries took for granted that the Psalm was directly Messianic. Not so modern scholars. Hardly any one would allow that the Psalm was written by *David*, and that *Domino meo* referred to David's Son, the Messias. What was regarded as a commonplace in the first century is taken as an impossibility in the twentieth. Sometimes this Psalm is assigned to Maccabean times, some nine centuries after David, and *Domino meo* is said to refer to Jonathan the Maccabee, a priest, who possessed regal or quasi-regal dignity. The Syrian king, Alexander, sent him a purple robe and a crown of gold.

Sometimes the Psalm is connected with Jonathan's successor, Simon, of whom we read that the Jews and the priests were well pleased that he should be their high priest

for ever until there should arise a faithful prophet (1 Mac. xiv, 35–38). This last suggestion receives support from the fact that the first letters of the first four verses make an acrostic on the name Simon.

This very seductive theory has, however, decisive points against it.

First, a hymn composed in honour of Simon the Maccabee can at most have had a vogue of some eighty years. Simon began his reign in 143 B.C.; by 60 B.C. the Maccabees were hated and detested by religious-minded Jews, and the family had died out some twenty-five years later. It exceeds all belief that a poem a little over a century old, a poem in honour of a detested Maccabee, should be universally accepted by the learned amongst the Jews as written by David a thousand years before, and applicable to the Messias.

Secondly, neither Jonathan nor Simon assumed the title or were regarded as kings. Royalty was only assumed by Aristoboulos c. 100 B.C. Their usurpation of royalty was fiercely resisted as an encroachment of Davidic prerogative by many of the Jews themselves. Now, the Psalm is at least addressed to a person occupying a legitimate royal throne. In Pharisaic circles it is inconceivable that such a Psalm should ever have been regarded as having an inspired character.

Thirdly, the Maccabees were only princes "until there should arise a faithful prophet." The Jews, therefore, knew nothing of a divine revelation regarding the Maccabean royalty, but this Psalm would claim supreme divine sanction for it.

Lastly, and this is utterly decisive: the Maccabees were priests of Aaron's line and priests first, and only afterwards kings. This Psalm speaks of someone who is king first, and who becomes a priest, and not of Aaron's line, but after the manner of Melchisedek.

The acrostic on Simon's name is rendered suspect by the fact that it does not continue throughout the Psalm, and

begins only at the fourth word, and that no acrostics on names are known in the Old Testament.

Hence, however ingenious or largely held, this suggestion is worthless.

Another theory attributes the Psalm to the days of the Prophet Zachary, about 400 B.C. (Zac. vi, 9–15), and refers *Domino meo* to Joshua the high priest. But Joshua was anything but a conquering king, *qui conquassabat capita multorum*, and the feeble community after the exile is most unlikely ever to have felt in a mood to write a Psalm of such extravagant hopes. Moreover, as in the case of the Maccabees so in the case of Joshua, the Aaronic priesthood is the thing taken for granted, kingship the new dignity conferred, in the Psalm it is precisely the reverse.

Another theory refers the Psalm to a Jewish king before the exile; for instance, Jehoshaphat, who was victorious over the Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites. But the Jews, who told the story of king Ozias smitten with leprosy for having dared to usurp priestly functions in the temple when offering incense, are not likely to have at the same time invented a divine oracle bestowing everlasting priesthood on Jehoshaphat. In fact, the assignation of priesthood to Jewish kings, and a priesthood superior to that of Aaron, is irreconcilable with the whole tenor of their history.

Professor Briggs, finally, in his scholarly and magnificent commentary on the Psalms, cuts the Gordian knot by rejecting the words *secundum ordinem Melchisedek* as spurious. Such rejection, however, is an act of despair—not of scholarship. And, after all, their rejection leaves the problem practically where it was.

After all these theories we turn with relief to the ancient Jewish and Christian interpretation that the Psalm was written by David, and refers to the Messias. This, of course, means that it contains a prophecy about the distant future.

As believers we find no difficulty in this, but even, from a modern standpoint, it is not inconceivable that David, who foretold the never-ending permanency of his royalty in his swan song in the Second Book of Kings, should when he

had conquered Jerusalem and reigned in Zion, have thought that a descendant of his should one day be what Melchisedek was, a priest of the Most High, who received tithes even of Abraham.

Not only as Catholics, but as scholars, we conclude that the Christian interpretation of the Psalm has more intrinsic probability than the others.

So far the Old Testament. We come to the New Testament. This compares Melchisedek's priesthood to Christ's in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is argued that Christ's priesthood, represented by Melchisedek, is greater than that of Aaron, because (1) Melchisedek blessed Abraham and "without contradiction that which is inferior is blessed by what is superior." Aaronic priests were contained in the loins of Abraham, and thus received a blessing from a higher priesthood. (2) Christ's priesthood, according to the order of Melchisedek, was confirmed by a divine oath, "*juravit Dominus et non poenitebit eum*," but Aaron's was established without one. (3) Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedek, and thus acknowledged his inferiority and that of the priests to be born of him. (4) Melchisedek's name and title describe him as king of justice and of peace, "sedek" meaning justice, and "salem" peace. No such titles are given by God to others. (5) Melchisedek, as portrayed in Scripture, was "without father and mother and without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life; but like unto the Son of God, continuing a priest for ever." Aaronic priests come and go, are born and die, but Melchisedek's priesthood is eternal and unchangeable.

These arguments may at first strike the reader as the outcome of the highly-inventive genius of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, but they are not so. The mysterious figure of Melchisedek was the object of considerable speculation of the early rabbis. He had become a superhuman, an angelic and quasi-divine person. In the *Targum* he is said to be none other than Sem, Noah's son, who had never died, the patriarch of all the Semites. If

Abraham was blessed by and paid tithes to a priest, he must at least be a Semite, and not a pagan son of Japhet or of cursed Cham. In the Ethiopic book of Adam and Eve, which in its original form was a Jewish production, fantastic stories are told how Melchisedek, as a stainless youth, was set to guard the bodies of our first parents, how he carried thither bread and wine, and being hidden throughout the course of centuries, at last met Abraham. However weird and worthless these stories, they show the trend of thought in some circles. In Alexandrian Jewish schools Philo, contemporary of Our Lord, could refer to Melchisedek as some embodiment of the Logos, and the bread and wine he brought as symbols of joyous virtues of the wise man. St. Jerome, in his most interesting letter to the priest Evagrius, tells us as the result of his researches in ancient books that people have seen in Melchisedek some archangel, or even the Spirit of God or the Holy Ghost, in fact Melchisedek had to some become a theophany, like the angel that wrestled with Jacob or the angels entertained by Abraham. Jewish thought had been deeply exercised by the problem of Melchisedek, and the argument that he flits across the stage of Scripture without indication of his birth or death, without father, mother, or genealogy and, therefore, was a mysterious superhuman personality, was one well known to the rabbis, and this inference from the silence of Scripture was used by them with regard to several other figures of the Old Testament. Scripture was inspired not merely in what it said, but also in what it omitted. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews was using a powerful method of reasoning which his Jewish readers would easily follow.

Great stir was created at the end of the last century when amongst the Tell El Amarna letters, that is the archives of the foreign office of the Pharaos Amenhotep III and IV (the latter was the father-in-law of Tut Anch Amen) there were found a great number of letters of Abd Hiba, the king of Jerusalem some centuries after Melchisedek. In these letters this king of Jerusalem, long before the Jews entered

Canaan, acknowledged that neither his father nor his mother had placed him on the throne, but the hand of the Great King. This was thought to be an endorsement of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where Melchisedek is said to be *sine patre et matre et genealogia.* This New Testament phrase might be, so it was supposed, a true reminiscence of the fact that the ancient sovereigns of Jerusalem were priest-kings, who claimed to owe their royalty not to descent, but to divine election. It may be so; the matter is certainly striking, but we must honestly acknowledge that it seems more natural to see in this phrase of the ancient king an acknowledgment that he was such, not by hereditary principle, but through appointment by an overlord, be he the king of Egypt or of the Hittites, in other words he owned himself a vassal-king. The Great King is not God, but the monarch of Thebes or Carchemish. Whatever may be the truth on this interesting topic, the fact remains that the inspired writer sees in Melchisedek a type of Christ as priest, and that on this point there can be no doubt whatever amongst Catholics.

None the less, this by itself does not directly prove that Melchisedek's offering bread and wine was a divinely foreordained type of the sacrifice of the Mass.

Non-Catholic Christians point out that the Epistle to the Hebrews, although it gives five points of comparison between Melchisedek and Christ, does not include a reference to Melchisedek's bread and wine and the Eucharist. As non-Catholics reject any sacrificial idea in the Mass, they see in this a proof for their contention. But not rightly so. St. Paul's reasoning was limited by the purpose he had in view. He wrote to converts from Judaism, who had, alas, wavered in their faith. He wished to persuade them, he wished to bring conviction to them. They still hankered after the glories of the Aaronic priesthood. They could not bring themselves to believe that it had all passed away. They had, indeed, accepted Christ, were baptized, received the Holy Ghost, and the great gift of the Blessed Sacrament, and yet they believed in the need and efficacy of Jewish

sacrifices. St. Paul evidently wrote to rabbinically-schooled people. He uses the well-known figure of Melchisedek, acknowledged by all to foreshadow the Messiah, to show that Christ's priesthood has utterly superseded that of Aaron, that there is no need of another Sacrifice than that on Calvary. Calvary had completely done away with the need of daily ever-renewed sacrifices of the Old Law. Christ is the priest, the priest for ever, symbolized by Melchisedek. As St. Paul labours to bring out the uniqueness, the completeness, the everlasting character of Calvary, it would have been confusing the issues, and introducing irrelevant matter if he had attempted to explain at the same time the sacrificial character of the Mass as the application of the merits of Calvary and a continuation and renewal thereof.

St. Paul does not refer to Melchisedek's sacrifice of bread and wine as type of the Eucharist, not because it was not true, but because all truth cannot be expressed in one sentence. Not all truth can be embodied in one chapter of the Bible. St. Paul intends to bring out the all-sufficiency of Calvary without the need of any priests of Aaron's line. He does so in a magnificent manner. If he had introduced the doctrine of the Mass, he would have unsettled the minds of his readers, who, as he says, had hardly grasped the very elements of Christian doctrine. Whatever the Greek or Aramaic equivalent may be for the French proverb: *Qui trop embrasse, mal étreint*, St. Paul understood it, and acted upon it.

Non-Catholics, however, go still further. Not only does St. Paul not mention it, he directly excludes it. On this point we cannot but give our opponents a categorical denial. So far from excluding it, he presupposes it. According to St. Paul Christ is priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedek. God, His Father, Himself has sworn it, and God will not repent.

This perpetuity of priesthood is, according to St. Paul, a living actual reality, not merely the reminiscence of a past act, or a mere remembrance of Calvary. St. Paul, in this very epistle to the Hebrews, describes Christ as ever

living to make intercession for us, *semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis*, and in the Epistle to the Romans likewise, we read of "Christ Jesus who died, yea who is risen again; who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Although, according to St. Paul, in one sense the Sacrifice of Calvary is over and gone, nothing is more certain than that the priesthood of Christ has not exhausted itself in that one historic act. On the contrary, in St. Paul's mind Christ is a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedek, because He is "for ever able to save to the uttermost those who come to the Father by him." He is always functioning as priest. He is incessantly exercising His priesthood, and by that exercise of the priesthood saving men to the uttermost. St. Paul, in a later chapter, having left Melchisedek as a type of Christ, describes the exercise of Christ's priesthood in a way that makes it obvious that he is thinking of the Jewish High Priest on the Day of Atonement, who after the slaying of the victim enters with the blood thereof into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkles the blood on the Mercy Seat.

So Christ by His death has entered into the Holy of the Holies, not made with hands. He has, leaving this earth, gone behind the veil into the presence of His Father to act and live everlastingly as priest.

Such is the thought of St. Paul, and nothing is further removed from his mind than the idea of Christ sitting idle at the right of His Father, only resting and remembering what once He had done. It is true that St. Paul in this Epistle does not, except in one possible instance, refer to the Mass as a sacrifice, but the everlasting, active, energizing, living priestly life is emphasized. Christ is thought of as throughout the ages incessantly sprinkling the Precious Blood of the New Covenant on the Mercy Seat of God. The Mass is the natural outcome of the teaching of St. Paul, it clamours for it, and by it is brought to crowning completeness.

The Lord has said unto My Lord: "Sit thou at my right

hand." God has sworn and He will not repent: "Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedek," and God has kept, and is daily keeping His Word in the Sacrifice of the Mass. Christ not only daily gives His Flesh and Blood under the appearance of bread and wine as a refreshment to men, but as Melchisedek did, He offers it up to God, for He is *The* priest of the Most High

IV

CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES IN JOSEPHUS

A GREAT stir was recently created in English University circles, and even in the daily Press, by what was called "The Russian Josephus." The matter was of interest, not merely to philologians, who welcomed perhaps the oldest text in ancient Russian, as distinct from Southern Slavonic, not merely to historians, who welcomed further light on so interesting a writer as Josephus, but to theologians and even to the general public; for the text contained lengthy references to St. John the Baptist and to our Blessed Lord and Early Christendom. As a matter of fact, these references had long been known. They were published in a German translation by W. Berendts as far back as 1906, but had been repudiated "almost with indignation," to use the words of Prof. Berendts, as not genuine by the leaders of critical thought, with the exception of two Catholic scholars, H. Delehaye and A. Goethals; whereas R. Seeberg, a non-Catholic writer, acknowledged them to be by some Jewish writer (not Josephus), but enlarged by Christian additions. The present writer felt convinced of the genuine character of the passages, and hence embodied some of them in his chapter on St. John the Baptist in *Prophets, Priests, and Publicans*, published two years ago.

The sudden revival of interest in these passages arose from the publication of the late Prof. Berendts' German translation of the Russian Josephus, which has begun in the Acts and Commentaries of the University of Dorpat; and more especially from the efforts of Professor Robert Eisler, who, in a number of learned centres, lectured on this subject, and is about to publish in German, French, and English his studies on this problem. Prof. Eisler holds that

the Russian is indeed a translation of the Aramaic of Josephus' *Jewish War*, and that the passages referring to the Baptist, Christ, and the Apostles are genuine, though retouched by a Christian hand.

Before we discuss these passages, it is important that readers should have the actual text before them.

Concerning St John the Baptist

I

(*Book II, ch. vii, after* 2, *before the opening words of* §3.)

In those days there walked amongst the Jews a man in strange garments since he had glued the skins of oxen to his body, where it was not covered with his own hair. But in face he was like a savage. That one came to the Jews and called them to liberty, saying: "God has sent me, that I should show you the way of the Law, in which you will free yourselves from many tyrants, and no mortal will rule over you, only the Most High, who has sent me." And when the people heard this, they were glad. And all Judea that lies around Jerusalem followed him. And he did nothing else to them but that he dipped them in the River Jordan and then dismissed them, exhorting them that they should cease from evil works and promising that then there would be given unto them a Caesar, who would deliver them and subject all things hostile to them, but they themselves would be subject to none. At these words some blasphemed and others gained faith.

And when he was brought before Archelaus and the learned in the Law were gathered together, they asked him who he was, and where he had dwelt hitherto. And he answered and said: "I am guileless, as the Spirit of God has moved me, and I live on reeds and roots and wild fruit." Now, as they threw themselves upon him to torture him, that he should desist from his preachings and doings, he spoke: "It is you, who should abandon your abominable doings and turn back to the Lord your God."

On this Simon, a Pharisee, formerly one of the Essenes,

arose in great wrath and spoke: "We read the divine books every day, but thou, who hast come out of the forest as a wild beast, thou darest to teach us and to deceive the people with thy reckless speech." And he leaped forward to do him bodily mischief. But John rebuked them saying: "Unto you I will not reveal the mystery that dwelleth amongst you, for you would not. Hence there has come upon you an unspeakable evil and because of you it cometh." And after he had thus spoken he went to the country beyond the Jordan, and as no one dared to gainsay him he did the works which he had done before.

II

(*Book II, ch. ix, after paragraph* 1; *but* §§ 5–6 *of Greek precede* §§2–4.)

When Philip was in power (as tetrarch of Ituræa and the Trachonitis) he saw in a dream a vulture picking out his eyes. And he gathered all his wise men. But as each one interpreted the dream differently, there suddenly came unbidden before him the man who was going about in skins of beasts and purifying the people at fords of the Jordan. He said: "Hear the word of the Lord, the vulture is thy covetousness, for the bird is one of prey and robbery. And that sin will take away thy eyes, that is, thy power and thy wife." And when he had spoken, Philip died before the evening and his power was given. . .

III

(*Book II, ch. ix, paragraphs* 5–6 *of the Greek precede* §§ 2–4.)

And Herod, his brother, took Herodias, his wife. But on her account all learned in the Law abominated him, but dared not rebuke him to his face. But now that man, whom they called a savage, came to him in wrath and said: "Why hast thou taken the wife of thy brother, thou reckless one! Since thy brother has died a merciless

death, so thou also shalt be mowed down by the heavenly scythe. God's counsel will not be dumb, but will destroy thee through bitter evil in strange lands. For thou dost not raise seed to thy brother but satisfiest thy fleshly lusts and committest adultery, as there are of him four children." But when Herod had heard this, he waxed wrath and commanded that he should be beaten and driven away. But he (John) rebuked Herod wherever he found him, and this so long till he applied force and commanded that he should be cut down. But his character was strange and his kind of life not human, indeed as a disembodied ghost, so he persevered. His lips knew no bread, not even at the Passover did he eat unleavened bread, saying: "Such bread is given in memory of God, who delivered the people from bondage, to comfort them as the way was mournful." But wine and intoxicating drink he did not even allow near, and every animal (food) he abominated, and every wrong he rebuked, and for food he used twigs of trees.

Concerning Jesus Christ

(*Book II, ch. ix, between* 4 *and* 5.)

At that time also a man arose, if it be right to call him a man, his nature and form were indeed human but his appearance more than human, his works indeed were divine, he worked miracles astounding and mighty. Hence it is impossible to me to call him a man. But again, having regard to things in general, I would not call him angel either. And all he worked through some invisible power, he worked by word and command. Some said of him that he was our first Lawgiver, risen from the dead and (that he) showed forth many healings and achievements. But others thought that he was sent by God. But he went counter in many things to the Law and he did not keep the Sabbath according to the custom of the Fathers. However, on the other hand he committed nothing shameful, nor a crime, but by word he achieved

all things. And many of the people followed him and accepted his teachings. And many souls became unsettled, thinking that thereby the Jewish tribes would free themselves from Roman hands. Now it was his custom to stay mostly on Mount Olivet before the city. There also he granted the healings to the people. And one hundred and forty disciples gathered round him and a multitude of the people. When, however, they saw his power, that he carried out all he wished by word, they bade him make entrance into the city and cut down the Roman soldiers and Pilate and become king over them. But he refused it with contempt.

And after this when the Jewish leaders received an account of this, they gathered themselves together with the High Priest and said: We are powerless and weak to resist the Romans. But as the bow is bent, let us go and inform Pilate what we have heard and we shall be out of harm's way, lest when he hears it from others, we be spoiled of our goods and even massacred and our children scattered. And they went and told Pilate. And he sent and had many of the people cut down. And that Miracle-worker he caused to be brought to him. And as he instituted an enquiry on his account, he saw that he was a doer of good and not a doer of evil, nor a rebel, nor one who strove for sovereignty, and he dismissed him. He had in fact healed his wife when dying. And he went to his accustomed place and did his accustomed works.

And when again more people gathered round him, then he glorified himself by his working more than all.

The Teachers of the Law were poisoned with envy and gave Pilate thirty talents that he should kill him, and after he had taken the money, he abandoned him to their will, that they themselves should carry out their purpose. And they took him and crucified him against the Law of the Fathers.

Concerning the Apostles

(*Lib. II, cap ii*, 6.)

Claudius sent again his governors to those states, Cuspius Fadus and Tiberius Alexander, who both kept the people in peace since they did not allow them in any point to deviate from the pure Law. And as often as some one deflected from the Law it was denounced to the Teachers of the Law and they sent him to the presence of the Emperor. And as at the time of those two (Fadus and Alexander) many had shown themselves as disciples of the above named Miracle-worker, and as they spoke to the people about their Teacher that he was alive though he had died and that he would free you (*sic*) from bondage, many of the people listened to the above mentioned and accepted for themselves their command; not for the sake of honour, for indeed they were of the simple folk, some even shoemakers, others sandalmakers, others artisans. And what marvellous signs they worked, in truth, whatever they wished!

But since those noble governors saw the seduction of the people, they planned with the scribes to lay hold on them and to put them to death, for the insignificant is not insignificant when it matures into something great. But they felt ashamed and were terrified about the signs, as they said: in a normal way such miracles do not occur, but when they do not have their origin in God's council, they will swiftly be proved wrong. And they gave them (the disciples of Christ) leave to do as they would. Afterwards, however, being troubled by them, they (the Jewish leaders) sent them (the disciples) away, some to the Emperor, others to Antioch, and others in far away countries to probe the matter. Claudius then removed both the governors and sent Cumanus.

Concerning the Temple Inscription

(*Book V, ch.* 5, § 2, *after* " *by* 14 *steps from the first court.*")

And above those tablets with inscriptions [threatening death in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin against Gentile intruders on the Temple precincts] hung a fourth tablet with an inscription in those (Hebrew) characters stating: Jesus had not reigned as king, he was crucified by the Jews because he announced the destruction of the city and the desolation of the Temple.

Concerning the Temple Curtain

(*Book V, ch.* 5, § 4, *after words* " *representing living creatures.*")

Before this generation this curtain was intact, because the people were godly, but now it was pitiable to look at. In fact, it had suddenly been rent from top to bottom, when through bribery they delivered to death the Doer of good, the man, who yet in his deeds was not a man. And one could tell of many other terrible signs which happened in those days.

And it was said that he, after he was killed, after the burial, was not found in the tomb. Now some claim that he is risen, but others that he was stolen by his friends. But I do not know who is right. For a dead person cannot rise of himself, but he can with the help of the prayer of another righteous person, unless indeed he be an angel or some other of the heavenly powers, or when God himself appears as man, fulfils what he will and walks with men, and falls and lays himself down and arises as is according to his will. But others say that it was impossible to steal him, because they had put watchers round his tomb, thirty Romans, but a thousand Jews. Such things are told of that curtain, also against the reason of its being rent there are (arguments ?).

Prophecy of the Messias

(*Book VI, ch.* 5, § 4, *after the words "deceived in their determination."*)

Some, in fact, understood thereby Herod, the others the crucified Miracle-worker Jesus, but others Vespasian.

Are these passages the genuine utterances of Josephus? Everything points to the fact that they are. Josephus himself tells us that previous to the publication of his Greek edition of the *Jewish War*, he had written an account of the war in his native language for the non-Greeks of what we now call Syria and Mesopotamia, and that in his Greek edition he had recast this previous work for the benefit of his Greek-speaking friends. His knowledge of Greek seems, in his younger days, to have been very imperfect. He says himself: "Afterward"—*i.e.* after his capture and settlement at Rome—"I got leisure at Rome, and when all my materials were prepared for that work, I made use of some persons to assist me in learning the Greek tongue, and by these means I composed the history of those transactions" (*c.* Apion I).

It is this first, or Aramaic, edition which is preserved for us in the thirteenth-century translation into Russian, which is now being published in a German translation. Josephus, in the Preface to his Greek edition, had stated in so many words: "I have proposed to myself for the sake of such as live under the government of the Romans, to translate those books into Greek, which I formerly composed in the language of our country and sent to the Upper-Barbarians"—*i.e.* Parthians, Babylonians, the remotest Arabians, and the Jews beyond the Euphrates and the Adiabeni, as Josephus explains.

Now, these passages are not found as separate fragments, but naturally imbedded in the Russian text of the *Jewish War*. This text is obviously another edition to that represented by the Greek. The differences between the Russian and the current Greek edition are not due either to idiosyncrasies of the Russian translator, or to

fortuitous differences of various copies of the same Greek text. They are due to a deliberate remodelling of the text. The text utilized by the Russian translator is more vivid and simple, less involved and ornate, more staccato and Oriental, and now and then showing more lively touches than that of the current Greek. In order to show the difference we shall give a short passage of Whiston's translation and compare it with a literal translation of the German of Berendts', which is a literal translation by an expert authority from the old Russian. We shall retain Whiston's wording wherever possible.

(*Book I, ch. xiv.*)

Greek Edition.

He first of all went to Antony on account of the friendship his father had with him, and laid before him the calamities of himself and his family and that he had left his nearest relations besieged in a fortress and had sailed to him through a storm to make supplication to him for assistance.

Hereupon Antony was moved to compassion at the change that had been made in Herod's affairs and this both upon his calling to mind how hospitably he had been treated by Antipater, but more especially on account of Herod's own virtue; so he then resolved to get him made king of the Jews, whom he had himself formerly made tetrarch. The contest also that he had with Antigonus was another inducement, and that of no less weight than the great regard he had for Herod; for he

Aramaic Edition.

And when he had come to Antony, who had friendship for him on account of his father, he wept before him about his calamities and about his family and how he had left his own people besieged in a city. Antony when he heard this felt inclined towards him and had compassion on him. And he called to mind in prudence his virtue and resolved to make him king of the Jews. But Antony persuaded Caesar, and Caesar was prepared as remembering his good-will which Herod's father had shown to him and how Antipater had given help against Egypt with supplies and with troops. And when he had called the Senate together and after he had placed Herod in their midst, Messala and Trangantinus began to praise and extol Herod on account of his intelligence and wit, on account of his bravery in battle,

looked upon Antigonus as a seditious person, and an enemy of the Romans: and as for Caesar, Herod found him better prepared than Antony as remembering very fresh the wars he had gone through together with his father, the hospitable treatment he had met with from him, and the entire good-will he had shown to him; besides the activity which he saw in Herod himself. So he called the Senate together, where in Messalas, and after him Atratinus, presented Herod to them, and gave a full account of the merits of his father, and his own good-will to the Romans. At the same time they demonstrated that Antigonus was their enemy, not only because he soon quarrelled with them but because he now overlooked the Romans, and took the government by the means of the Parthians.

These reasons greatly moved the Senate, at which juncture Antony came in and told them that it was for their advantage in the Parthian war that Herod should be king; so they all gave their votes for it. And went out with Herod between them; while the consul and the rest of the magistrates went before them, in order to offer sacrifices, and to lay the decree in the Capitol. Antony also made a feast for Herod on the first day of his reign.

on account of his military capacity, his ability, above all on account of his good-will to the Romans. But while the Senate listened, Antony went away and spoke to his own: It is proper to create Herod king and profitable, for he will be leader and helper against the Parthians. And when the Senate was separated, Antony and Caesar went out with Herod between them into the palace, but the Roman priests, the princes and consuls to the Capitol to offer sacrifices and to make a decree concerning the kingship of Herod. For thus it is customary with them when Caesar grants some one a dignity, it is not confirmed, as long as he does not write it down on the Capitol. When it is proclaimed, they offer sacrifices royally and thereby it will be firm.

If we study this passage for a moment, we notice first

the final explanation of the Roman sacrifice and registration of deeds in the Capitol. In a book written at Rome this was obviously superfluous, for every reader knew the local custom, but in a book written for the " Upper Barbarians " of Syria and Mesopotamia this explanation was necessary.

Secondly, we notice that the account really differs in points of importance : (*a*) the stress on Antony's resentment against Antigonus as a motive for favouring Herod ; (*b*) the statement that Caesar was even better prepared than Antony, whereas in the Russian text Antony has to persuade him ; (*c*) the statement that Herod's father Antipater had given help against Egypt with supplies and with troops is a detail only found in the Russian text ; (*d*) the statement that Antigonus had slighted the Romans and taken the government by means of the Parthians is a detail only in the current Greek text ; (*e*) the detail that while the Senate listened, Antony went out to speak to his own is only in the Russian text ; (*f*) the Greek only says that Antony had formerly made Herod tetrarch.

Thirdly, we notice that the Russian is more Oriental in tone : (*a*) Herod " weeps " before Antony ; (*b*) the speeches are given in the direct oration, not the oblique one ; (*c*) the fulsome flattery of Herod ; (*d*) " the priests, the princes, and the consuls " is a more orientalized summary of the Roman Senate than the correct " the consul and the rest of the magistrates " ; (*e*) compassion for a turn in the wheel of fortune is a typical Greek commonplace. The passage, therefore, is clearly the Aramaic worked over and re-edited by someone with fuller knowledge of Greek style and Roman customs, and with the additional information that the Senate acted as much from distrust of Antigonus as from admiration of Herod. The enthusiasm for Herod amongst the Roman Senators was slightly overdone in the original account and less probable.

The passage is typical of the remainder, as far, at least, as we can judge from Berendts' text published by Konrad Grass. There can hardly be a reasonable doubt that the Russian text is a translation of Josephus' first edition of the

Jewish War. The present writer feels inclined to think that it is directly after the Aramaic original, and not through the intermediacy of a Greek version. Such a direct version could easily be made by Jewish scholars, to whom Josephus must always be a book of great interest, and who were strong in Eastern Europe. Even in Western Europe, Jews seem to have possessed Josephus in Aramaic during the Middle Ages. There seems nothing extraordinary in a Jew of the thirteenth century translating this book in the Russian vernacular.

There is nothing to suggest that the passages referring to the Baptist, Christ, and the Apostles are insertions into the text by another hand than Josephus. They were certainly not written by a Christian, but by some Jew of early antiquity. Why suppose another Jew when Josephus would be the obvious and natural author? The suggestion that though originally written by Josephus, they were later modified by a Christian seems quite gratuitous. A Christian who was scandalized by the Jewish tone of the passages would either have omitted them altogether or inserted a more emphatic denial; he would certainly not have been satisfied with slipping in a few ambiguous and colourless sentences, leaving Josephus' hesitation throughout.

The only possible Christian sentence would be—" or when God himself appears as a man, and carries out what he wills and walks with men and falls and lies down and rises as is according to his will." In this third alternative to explain the Resurrection one might see a Christian assertion of Christ's divinity. But, on the other hand, it is in natural sequence to the preceding. Resurrection is said to be possible in three ways: (1) through prayer of the just, (2) if the risen man were really an angel, (3) if he were God in the guise of man. Moreover, even the phraseology of the last sentence is unchristian in tone, because it shows obvious embarrassment in allowing the possibility of the real *death* in such a case: " he falls and lies down and rises." It would be only a pageant, not reality. Would a Christian at any time have expressed himself thus? Not if the New

Testament, the Didache, and St. Ignatius are giving us the customary Christian way of speaking.

But how could Josephus as a Jew speak as these passages make him speak ?

In answer to this, the present writer ventures to repeat what he wrote a few years ago about this point in *The Gospels ; Fact, Myth, or Legend.*

Josephus was born at Jerusalem some seven years after our Lord died, and, after a long and stormy career, ended his life at Rome about A.D. 100. His life is well known. He was in command of the Jewish Army in Galilee at the beginning of the great Jewish rebellion, which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. He was taken prisoner, but his life was spared, for he succeeded in ingratiating himself with his captors. He went, in fact, over to the enemy, and was utilized by them as a go-between at the terrible siege of the Holy City. He remained a Jew, indeed, but he was what we now would style " a liberal Jew," who thought his orthodox brethren utterly misguided in their insurrection against the noble Romans. He thought that the fanatical misinterpretations of the Messianic prophecies had brought ruin to his people. He came into high favour at the Emperor's Court, his " broad views " and his judicious flattery made him friends in highest circles ; he even applied the Scripture prophecies to the Roman Emperor. He received a pension from the State, and devoted himself to the writing of history. Proud in one sense of being a Jew, yet proud also of his attainments and culture, anxious to please, yet half-sincere and not without ideals, this refined and liberal-minded Jew wrote in his *Antiquities* about Jesus, that much-discussed prophet of his nation.

And what did he write ? He wrote as follows :

> Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one should call Him a man, for He was the doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such as receive the truth with pleasure. He was the " Christ " ; and when Pilate at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us had

condemned Him to the cross, those that loved at the first did not forsake Him; for He appeared unto them alive after three days, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning Him, and the tribe of the Christians so named from Him, are not extinct at this day.

The grounds for rejecting this passage were never very persuasive. There is no manuscript of Josephus that omits it. There is no writer previous to the sixteenth century who rejects it, or even doubts it. The passage is actually quoted in its entirety, as written by Josephus, by the famous Greek historian Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History*, which was published *c.* A.D. 325. Eusebius was probably the greatest book-lover of his time, but he had clearly never heard of a copy of Josephus without it. Nor has anyone since. Josephus certainly has passages about St. John the Baptist and about St. James, which passages no one at present doubts. Josephus obviously reverenced both St. John and St. James. Josephus tells the history of his people, especially contemporary history, in minute detail almost year by year. He refers to James as the brother of Jesus, and yet we are asked to believe that the passage about Jesus Himself is a fraudulent insertion by some Christian. But a Christian would not have used the haughty and disdainful phrase, "the tribe of Christians." By the beginning of the second century he recited in the Apostles' Creed that he believed in the holy Catholic Church; in his oldest Prayer-Book, dating from about A.D. 80, he was told to pray at the Eucharist for "Holy Church."

A Christian would have betrayed himself by the standing Christian formula for the Resurrection—he rose again the third day; a Christian does not naturally use the quaint words: "he appeared to them alive after three days." A Christian would hardly have thought it much that his tribe "was not extinct" at that time, for he counted his brethren by the hundred thousand in every land from Spain to Persia; to describe them as not extinct would indeed have been to damn with faint praise.

But how could a Jew, who remained a Jew, call Jesus the Christ? If he believed that Jesus was the Messiah, he was a Christian and ceased to be a Jew. That depends how we understand the phrase. If we put "the Christ" in inverted commas, we get at the meaning of Josephus. Most of his readers had heard about "the Christ." Nero had put to death an immense multitude of the followers of this "Christ"; Domitian had put to death even members of the Imperial Household for following this "Christ." Now, Jesus was this "Christ," says Josephus to his readers. He does not imply that he believed Jesus to be indeed what he was called.

But, then, does not this Jewish historian really seem to believe that Jesus was the one foretold "by the divine prophets"? No, not necessarily; he gives but a description of the claim made by the Christians. Do not forget that, from the days of St. Paul, the Christians claimed and repeated a thousand times that Jesus died, and was buried, and rose again *according to the Scriptures*. The Jews heard constantly from the lips of Christians what the disciples going to Emmaus heard from the lips of Christ: "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the Scriptures He expounded the things concerning Him" (Luke xxiv, 25, 26).

But, surely Josephus speaks of Jesus in an appreciative tone? Yes, he does; he was a liberal, and not an orthodox, Jew; he apparently reverenced John and James and Jesus. Josephus was indeed intensely proud of his race, but he had broken with his compatriots, he had gone over to the Romans and had become their pensioner. He loathed the fanaticism which had cruelly murdered such noble figures as James and Jesus. The Christians—the followers of the meek, yet wonderful Jesus of Nazareth—had had no share in the wild orgy of fanaticism which brought Jerusalem to ruin. He could write respectfully and even with a touch of awe about this Jesus; he could write calmly and con-

descendingly about the Christians from his comfortable house in Rome.

Now, the passages in the *Jewish War* were written almost twenty years before the passages in the *Antiquities*; moreover, they were written in Aramaic for his fellow-Jews in the East. The cleavage between Christians and Jews cannot have been so pronounced in A.D 70 as it was in 90, after the fall of Jerusalem, when Christians and Jews had become two totally separate communities. Jews and Christians still worshipped together in Jerusalem, and Josephus, as priest, had seen them do so daily from the days of his youth. A Jew could speak considerately of Jesus of Nazareth and still be a Jew. Josephus thought James the brother of the Lord at Jerusalem a good and holy man, and his murder a great crime. The Christians, by their total abstention from anti-Roman fanaticism and withdrawal from Jerusalem must, in many ways, have appeared to Josephus as model Jews—at least, if Josephus' writings give any clue to his own character. In a book addressed to his eastern neighbours immediately after the fall of the city, appreciative remarks about Christ are not unnatural. When writing later, regard both for his own people and for the Romans, who slew an immense multitude of Christians under Nero and who persecuted them under Domitian, made Josephus measure his words. This would sufficiently account for the omission of the passages in his Greek edition of the *Jewish War* and for the meagre allusions to Christianity in the *Antiquities*.

Now, with regard to the contents of the new passages

The First Passage concerning John the Baptist contains an error. The Baptist cannot have been brought before Archelaus, for he was deposed when the Baptist was at most fourteen years old. The Governor can only have been Valerius Gratus or Pontius Pilate, who succeeded him when John was about thirty. It is not impossible that in the Russian translation the better-known name Archelaus replaced the name Valerius, and that the mistake is not really that of Josephus. The encounter with Simon the Essene

may well be based on fact. The Second Passage likewise contains an error. Philip the Tetrarch died in A.D. 34, at least a couple of years, if not more, after St. John. Josephus was misled by the identity of names of Herod's son by the second Mariamne and Herod's son by Cleopatra of Jerusalem; both were called Philip; only the second became tetrarch. Herod had ten wives, and his family relations are complicated. Moreover, in Josephus' eyes, Herod the Tetrarch's crime consisted in a mere transgression of the levitical law—*i.e.* the marrying of a deceased brother's wife after she had borne children to him. The Baptist would hardly have left his desert to rebuke Herod for such a peccadillo; it was adultery which he rebuked, as Josephus in his later work admits.* Since Josephus corrects a number of errors of his previous work in his later work *Antiquities*, there is nothing strange in admitting that Josephus here was mistaken. Josephus' account of St. John, which he wrote some eighteen years later in *Antiquities*, is much more colourless and tame than the one in the *Jewish War* which is given above. It is true he corrects his mistake about Herodias as deceased brother's wife, and plainly sets it forth as a case of adultery. Having narrated the defeat of Herod's army by Aretas, his father-in-law, he continues (*Antiquities*, Book XVIII, ch. v, § 2):

> Some Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly as a punishment of what he did against John that was called the Baptist; for Herod slew him who was a good man and commanded (continue as in book. *Antiquities*, Book XVIII, ch. v, paragraph 2).

Josephus thus corrects the misstatement of John having been simply cut down because he pursued Herod with his rebukes, and, in harmony with the Gospels, he places him

*Tertullian in his work against Marcion, Book IV, 34, seems to have had Josephus' first text before him, as he also makes Herod's sin a breach of levitical law.

in prison first where eventually he is put to death. On the other hand, he ascribes Herod's murder to political reasons, and does not connect it with John's rebuke of his adultery, though the people thought that Herod's defeat by Aretas was God's punishment for his murder of the Baptist.

The passage concerning our Blessed Lord is supposed to contain a reference to a fact only alluded to in the Gospels :

> There were present, at that very time, some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answering said to them : Think you that those Galileans were sinners above all the men of Galilee because they suffered such things ? No, I say to you : but unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower fell in Siloe and slew them : think you that they also were debtors above all the men that dwelt in Jerusalem ? No, I say unto you : but except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish. (Luke xiii, 4.)

It is suggested that the Galileans here mentioned were misguided followers of our Lord, who tried by violence to begin the Messianic kingdom, notwithstanding our Lord's refusal to enter Jerusalem as king ; and that the Tower of Siloam did not fall by accident, but, being held by these Galileans, was broken down by the Roman military. It is certainly an ingenious suggestion, and may have a foundation in fact. It receives some confirmation from the words in St. Mark (xv, 7) : " Barabbas, who was put in prison with the seditious men, who in the sedition had committed murder." The sedition (with the article) is here supposed to be something well known and probably recent, so, likewise, the seditious men are referred to as a well-known category of men, the rioters, the revolutionaries. *Stasis* and *stasiastes*, the two Greek words used, would fit in well with the suggestion of a political revolutionary movement, a political riot against the Roman authority.

In the *Antiquities* (Book XVIII, ch. iii, § 3), where the old

well-known passage about our Lord occurs, it also immediately follows the story of *a sedition* in Jerusalem ; but this sedition, which was suppressed with much bloodshed, was caused by Pilate's use of sacred money for his contemplated aqueduct. There is, however, no indication that the seditionists were Galileans. If we combine the two data, we shall probably approach nearest to historical reality in this way.

Jerusalem was in a ferment about Pilate's interference with the Temple treasure in order to pay the expenses of the aqueduct. The excited nationalists hoped that Jesus of Nazareth might lead the movement of revolt. Their overtures were indignantly rejected by our Lord. The revolt, none the less, took place ; it was quelled as Josephus describes. As the fortress Antonia overlooked the Temple, the crowd of rebels at the gates of the fortress, and the Roman soldiery surrounding them, came in contact with a crowd of Galilean worshippers, who were perfectly innocent, but who became involved in the bloodshed. Barabbas, a brigand and a mob leader, used the opportunity for arson and murder, and was imprisoned. Our Lord was interrogated by Pilate, but dismissed. The falling of the Tower of Siloam was a matter of pure accident. Our Lord continued his ministry outside Jerusalem. He raised Lazarus from the dead. This stimulated the envy of the Jewish leaders : they determined on his death and brought him to the cross on Good Friday.

We must be grateful to Dr. Robert Eisler for calling attention to these facts in his letter to *The Times*, for they possess a high degree of intrinsic probability. Should they prove to be true, one would infer that Josephus is also right in stating that our Lord was interrogated already once before by Pilate previous to his Passion. Josephus' expression that our Lord, having been released by Pilate, " glorified himself through his works above all " (masc. plur. in German : *verherrlichte sich durch sein wirken mehr als alle*), would fit in well with the account of the raising of Lazarus, a man four days in the grave. Very striking also is the precise number

of the followers of Christ, given as 150, which tallies not too badly with the number of Christ's followers given in Acts i, 15, as "about 120," and also with the Gospels, which refer to 12 Apostles, 72 disciples, the brethren of Jesus and the women that followed—we know the names of 4—a number therefore approximating 100.

The number of 30, given as that of the Roman soldiers watching the tomb, is also quite likely to be correct; the number 1,000 for the Jews is probably a mere expression to indicate a big crowd. The real meaning would probably be rendered in English by "of the Jews, thousands," not necessarily implying that precisely 1,000 Jews stood round the tomb the whole of the time from the burial to the Resurrection, but that about 1,000 Jews visited the tomb at intervals between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning, so as to make the removal of the body an obvious impossibility, there never being a time when some group of Jews was not in the immediate vicinity.

That the Jews bribed Pilate with 30 talents is not very likely; it is much more likely to be an echo of Judas' betrayal for 30 silverlings. It is, however, in complete harmony with other references of the Aramaic Josephus to Roman cupidity and venality. Of these we give a striking instance in the following passages, which occur only in the Russian version:

> After the Italians, the so-called Latins, had taken [Antipater's] bribes they wrote almost incredible praise of him [to Herod, his father] saying: He alone is your defender, guardian, shield and deliverer from your shameless sons. But for him your first two reckless sons would have killed you, and these two present ones, Archelaus and Philip, who are students of philosophy here, complain very much against you, reviling you and saying you are scarcely human. For such are the Latins, they run after bribes and break their oaths for bribes. And in calumny they see no sin, saying: we only spoke a word, we did not commit murder ourselves; since these cursed people

think that he only is murderer, who kills with his hands, but calumny and denunciation and secret whispering against another are no murder. Had they known the Law of God, it would have told them of old what a murderer is. But after all they are aliens and our doctrine does not reach them. Therefore they lied also against the two sons of Herod, who were students, that he should put them to death.

Archelaus prepared a costly banquet for his travelling companions and the Romans, who by flattery had taken 300 talents from him, for they are insatiable in taking. Indeed, when a man to-day gives them more, to-morrow morning they want still more. And as the sea cannot be filled and Hades cannot be satiated, nor the cupidity of women, so the Romans are insatiable in taking. In fact they were like weeds [being mowed down on the field] sacrificing to us [Jews] here [in Palestine] their body and soul. They are even capable of sacrificing their limbs and their brothers and children. Some, indeed, by changing their madness into bravery out of sheer recklessness, others by coming down like crows on a carcass out of fierce lust for gold. Many are also capable of surrendering for a trifle cities as well as their leaders and closest companions. (Book I, ch. xxxi.)

The envy of the priests and the reluctance of Pilate are in striking confirmation of the main outline of the Passion story in the Gospels. The cure of Pilate's dying wife is an item additional to the Gospel account, but well in harmony with it. The whole tenor of the Josephan account precludes direct use of the first three Gospels, but suggests reliance on hearsay evidence, which, as Josephus spent his early life in Jerusalem where a great multitude under James of Jerusalem professed Christianity, is of exceptional interest.

The passage concerning the Apostles is also clearly independent of the text of the Acts, but it contains many indications that it arose in the same surroundings as the Acts. The well-known advice of Gamaliel in Acts v, 36–39,

"If this counsel or matter is from men, it will come to naught, if it is from God, you cannot destroy it," is implied in Josephus' account. The fact that the Apostles were indeed apprehended but released again, as told in the Acts, is likewise endorsed by Josephus. New is the statement that the Roman Governors acted in this matter in consultation with the Jewish religious authorities; the thing is not at all unlikely. In the Acts the civil authorities are completely in the background, the Jewish priests are the actors in the scene. The forcible dispersion of the followers of Christ, some to Rome, others to Antioch and distant lands, and that before the appointment of Cumanus—*i.e.* before A.D. 48—is new. Possibly Josephus had the sending of St. Paul to the Emperor in mind, but this happened after this date. It is remarkable that no allusion to Herod's execution of St. James and imprisonment of Peter is to be found. The direct though temporary permission to the disciples of Christ to act as they chose seems at first in contradiction with the statement in the Acts of a peremptory injunction of the authorities not to preach the name of Jesus. But Josephus perhaps refers to the civil authorities, who kept neutral; the Acts refer to the religious ones, who were hostile. In order to complete Josephus' references to early Christianity, we add the passage relative to St. James (in *Antiquities*, Book XX, ch. ix, § 4), though it speaks of twelve years later:

> Ananus, who took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper and very insolent; he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders above all the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed, since, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition he thought he had now a proper opportunity. Festus the Governor was now dead and Albinus the new Governor was but upon the road; so Ananus assembled the Sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called the Christ, whose name was James, and some others. And when he had formed an accusation against

them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned: but as for those who seemed the most equitable citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done; they also sent to the king (Agrippa) desiring him to send to Ananus that he should act so no more for that what he had already done was not to be justified.

The passage concerning the Temple inscription brings new information. One of the tablets threatening death to intruders has been discovered and is now in Constantinople. It is in Greek, and runs: "No foreigner to enter within the balustrade and parapet round the Temple, but whosoever misbehaves himself shall be liable to himself for ensuing death." The tablet against Christ must have been a retort to Pilate's inscription over the cross. It seems only to have been in Hebrew. Josephus omits reference to it in his later works, probably because it can have hung there only a few years and was no permanent feature of the Temple structure.

The passage concerning the Temple curtain is of particular interest, and we have already discussed what might possibly appear a Christian interpolation, and also the probability of the number 30 for the Roman soldiers being correct.

The passage concerning the Messianic prophecies contains the information that some applied them to Herod. I suppose, Herod the Great. Would this be an explanation of the party called "the Herodians" in the Gospels? St. Epiphanius, in his work *Against Heresies*, thought so, but the Saint's idea was usually discarded as an idle guess. In his Greek works Josephus resolutely applies these prophecies to Vespasian only, as is only natural. If the Aramaic work was written during the war and immediately after, his mere enumeration of the opinions of others is intelligible. Judging from the passage already quoted against the venality of the Romans, which seems to speak of Romans wildly risking their lives "here to us," the present writer would conclude that we have to deal with a history which arose out of a diary actually kept during the progress of the war.

V

THE HUMAN APPEARANCE OF CHRIST

In the *Observer* of July 11, 1926, readers were given a description of the appearance of Christ derived from Josephus. As Josephus was born in Palestine seven years only after Christ's resurrection, and cannot but have moved in circles where Christ's appearance was well known, this description would possess a remarkable interest for every Christian. The very fact that the *Observer* article was written by Dr. G. Box, whose name is a guarantee for sober scholarship, and that it was based on the researches of Dr. R. Eisler, whose name is connected with the study of the text of the Old Russian Josephus, proves that the description possesses some serious historical value and cannot be set aside as a sensational newspaper item.

This is the text in question. The words actually found in the Old Russian Josephus we are giving in ordinary type, the words inserted by Dr. Eisler in his *Reconstruction* are printed in italic type:

> At that time also a man came forward, if one may call a man one *whom his disciples called the Son of God.* His being and his figure were quite human, *a man of middle size, with a stooping back and a long face, a prominent nose, and with brows which grew together, so that those who saw him would get frightened; with very little hair, but parting it in the middle of his head according to the habit of the Nazarenes. His looks were quite simple;* only his pose was more than human, because he performed wonders through some invisible power. Considering, however, his quite ordinary nature, I for one shall not call him an angel. *His name was Jesus, and he was nicknamed the*

Messiah. By the Gentiles he was believed to be a sooth-sayer, but some of our people said of him that he was our first lawgiver, Moses, etc.

The texts on which this reconstruction is based are well known and easily accessible in v. Dobschütz' *Christusbilder.* Gebh. u. Harnack, 1899, Beilage VIII; though we owe to Dr. Eisler the suggestion that the reference to Josephus is genuine and that it cannot be set aside by a mere sign of exclamation as is done in *Christusbilder.*

As, then, the Greek and Latin texts that serve as the basis for Dr. Eisler's reconstruction are not in doubt, there remains the question whether the English translation given above does adequately represent them.

On this point I would enter a most serious query. Dr. Box tells us that, as Josephus gives us a malicious description of the Baptist, saying that " his face was that of a savage, his body was hairy all over, and where it was not covered over with the man's own hair he had pasted oxhides on to it, ' so a corresponding polemic and hostile description of Jesus was to be expected.

Now, first of all, even this translation of the description of St. John is made deliberately contemptuous, and it surely need not be so. Secondly, the inference that therefore the description of Our Lord must have been malicious and contemptuous also is, after all, a very weak inference. From Josephus' detailed exposition of Our Lord's work and influence, one would have concluded rather the opposite. The immediate context, therefore, is in favour of a kindly or at least unbiassed account of Our Lord's appearance. One might well think that, whereas the " savage " Baptist had less attraction for a refined Jew, Jesus of Nazareth may have pleased him better. It is quite true that Josephus hesitates to call Jesus an angel and emphasizes that He was in some sense surely human, still Josephus acknowledges that He worked marvels by an unseen power, that nothing evil could be laid to His charge. He tells of the noble refusal of Jesus to overthrow the Roman government by force. One

does not see why Josephus should have given a malicious description of Jesus ; almost everything tells the other way. Surely it is within the bounds of possibility that a Jewish priest, such as Josephus was, should be favourably impressed by the story of Jesus of Nazareth, although he did not ultimately become one of His professed followers. In the circles in which Josephus moved at so early a period, when James, the brother of the Lord, was a much respected figure in Jerusalem, when Christians worshipped with their Jewish brethren in the Temple, there must have been many who had a kindly though somewhat detached interest in the Christian movement. They cannot all have been firebrands like Saul of Tarsus, even though they were not professed Christians.

Whatever Josephus may have been, he was certainly not a fanatical Jew. His character, as far as we can gather it from his writings and his conduct during the Jewish war, rather suggests a tolerant, if somewhat patronising, description of the Man of Nazareth, whose name was so much on everyone's lips. There is therefore no real ground for accepting Dr. Eisler's and Dr. Box's *a priori* consideration that Josephus' description of Christ must have been hostile and malicious. Facing, therefore, the problem without this presupposition we hope to use the available evidence without prejudice.

First of all let us see what evidence there is for the idea that the Josephus passage originally contained a description of Our Lord's appearance. Avowedly it is not in the Ancient-Russian text published by Berendts, which runs as follows :

> At that time also a man came forward, if one may call him a man. His being and figure were indeed human, (. . . .) but his appearance more than human. His works, moreover, were divine, he worked miracles astounding and mighty. Hence it is impossible to me to call him a man, but again, on the ground of general considerations, I would not call him angel either. And all he worked through some invisible power, he worked by word and

command. Some said of him that he was our first Lawgiver, risen from the dead, and that he showed forth many healings and achievements. But others thought that he was sent by God, etc.

The bulk of Dr. Eisler's insertion occurs where we have marked the supposed lacuna by (. . . .). On the other hand he omits the words: "his works moreover were divine, he worked miracles astounding and mighty." On what grounds this omission is made, we cannot guess, except it be the conviction that Josephus could not have acknowledged that Christ performed "divine" works and that His miracles were astounding and mighty. As Josephus lower down distinctly acknowledges that Christ worked wonders through some invisible power, and as he repeats this again later on most emphatically, one does not see sufficient reason for this conviction. Dr. Eisler translates the words "on the ground of general considerations" by "considering his quite ordinary nature." The German of Berendts gives literally: "considering things in general." Dr. Eisler slips in the possessive pronoun "his" and thus renders: "considering his (i.e. Christ's) common (or general) things" by "considering his quite (common or) ordinary nature." It is just possible that Dr. Eisler's guess is right, but it goes beyond the actual text, and the first translation is simpler. In the Aramaic, as is well known, subordinate clauses and conjunctions in a sentence are rare, the different statements are mostly put in a bald series connected by and-and-and. In non-Semitic languages we naturally insert such conjunctions as: while, since, because, for, as though, etc. If we keep this in mind, we can translate thus:

At that time also a man came forward, if one may call him a man whose being and figure were indeed human, but whose appearance more than human. His works, moreover, were divine, he worked miracles astounding and mighty. Hence I cannot call him a (mere) man, but again on general grounds I would not call him an angel either though he worked all (he did) through some invisible

power and worked (only) by word and command. Some said of him . . . . but others thought . . . .

If we translate in this way the passage is perfectly coherent and intelligible, and just what we would expect from a man of the calibre of Josephus, nonplussed by the miracles and grandeur of Jesus, yet not one of His professed followers.

Whence, then, the insertion of Dr. Eisler ?

It is partially taken from the so-called Epistle of Lentulus. This curious document reads as follows :

> There came forward in these times and still lives a man of great power called Jesus Christ, who is called by the gentiles a prophet of truth, whom his disciples call the Son of God, raising the dead and healing all diseases ; a man, indeed, straight of figure, of middle size and handsome, with venerable features, whom onlookers could love and dread, with nut-coloured hair, the colour of ripening oats, smooth down to the ears, but from the ears downward in round curls, somewhat more dark and shiny, flowing about the shoulders, the parting being in the middle according to Nazarene custom, with a forehead plain and serene, with a face without spot or wrinkle, made beautiful by a slight colour, the nose and mouth are faultless, with a full but youngish beard of the same colour as the hair, not long, but on the chin a little divided in two ; with looks simple and sedate, with eyes brilliant, lively, and bright ; terrible in rebuke, mild, lovable in admonition, cheerful without loss of gravity, sometimes he wept, but he never laughed, in stature he was tall and straight, with hands and arms pleasant to see ; his speech was grave, infrequent and reserved, so that according to the prophet he was rightly called : " beautiful amongst the children of men."

This quaint and childlike production can be traced to the thirteenth or fourteenth century, when it was supposed to be taken from " The Annals of the Romans " by a certain

Eutropius. It is supposed to be a letter of a certain P. Lentulus (no doubt Pilatus), Governor of Judea, to the Roman Senate. It had a most extraordinary vogue in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and exists in countless manuscripts, and even in the twentieth century is sometimes met with in books of piety.

It is an obvious fabrication. The reference to the Hebrew prophet by the Governor of Judea addressing the Roman Senate, and the minute description of Our Lord's appearance in such a document, provoke an indulgent smile. Still these mediæval legends are often embroidered on some substratum of truth. Not, of course, that anyone believes that Pilate wrote a description of Christ's appearance to the Senate, but some mediæval scribe found something in some Annalist, which led to this play of his imagination.

What was it ?

The earliest reference we know to Our Lord's physical appearance occurs in Theodore the Reader, who flourished about A.D. 530, and he seems to quote the opinion of older authorities. He says that Our Lord had " curls and but little hair." This statement is repeated by Suidas (*c.* A.D. 1000) as supported by " the most accurate historians."

More important, in fact of decisive importance for us, are the words of Andrew of Crete, a well-known writer and bishop about A.D. 700. In a defence of the veneration of images, this author collects early instances of pictures of Christ, the Abgar picture, the Lydda picture, and the picture by St. Luke. This makes him refer to the accuracy of the representation, and leads him to close with the following words :

> But Josephus the Jew also tells us that the Lord looked thus : with full eyebrows and beautiful eyes, a long face, slightly bent forward, and well-set, as namely he appeared when dwelling amongst men ; in the same way also the appearance of the Mother of God, as it is now seen, and which some call " the Romaia."

Let us mark the five adjectives here said to have been

used by Josephus; we give the Greek words in latin characters: SYNOPHRYN, EYOPHTHALMON, MAKROPROSOPON, EPIKYPHON, EYELIKA. This passage of Andrew of Crete is also found as an Appendix to St. John Damascene's *The Orthodox Faith*, Book IV, 16, where the wording is slightly changed, though the description of Our Lord is identical. The ascription of this account to Josephus appeared to this transcriber somewhat doubtful, for after mentioning the name of "Josephus the Jew," he adds, "as some people say." St. John Damascene wrote his *The Orthodox Faith* in or about A.D. 750, therefore about fifty years after Andrew of Crete, but it is not certain whether this Appendix was added by St. John himself or by a later copyist. The copyist, whoever he was, felt a little suspicious of his authority.

The influence of this description of Our Lord is again seen in an elaborate word-painting of Christ's appearance in a life of our Blessed Lady by Epiphanius, a priest and monk of the Kallistratos monastery in Constantinople, written about A.D. 800, and afterwards utilized by another priest at Constantinople, Nicephorus by name. These two priests, in their anxiety to make Our Lord very beautiful, draw largely on their imagination, but it is striking that they say that Our Lord's eyebrows were "straight and not all curved," which reminds us of Josephus' word SYNOPHRYS; that they emphasize that Our Lord was slightly bent forward, which reminds us of Josephus' word EPIKYPHOS; that they use actually the same word as Josephus, EYOPHTHALMOS, and finally that they give Our Lord a long nose "epirrinos," which seems based on Josephus' MAKROPROSOPON. The likelihood that they had the Josephus passage before them is very great. It is to be noted, however, that they also say that Our Lord had curly hair, using the same word as Theodore the Reader.

Furthermore, in a description of Our Lord contained in a Synodal letter of the Bishops of the Orient to the Emperor Theophanes, in A.D. 836, exactly the same adjectives as occur in Josephus are used, all five of them in sequence, with the

addition of the adjective "curly-haired" as in Theodore, Epiphanius, and Nicephorus. In this Synodal letter distinct appeal is made to the tradition of the Fathers; this description, therefore, was then supposed to be very ancient and well known.

In Western Christianity we cannot trace this description further back than Vincent of Beauvais, that astounding early Dominican, who became a Friar Preacher in Paris in A.D. 1220, and who wrote the mediæval encyclopædia under the title of *Speculum Majus*. In Part III of this encyclopædia (*Spec. Historiale*, Book V, ch. 23) we find: "John Damascene. Book Four. Josephus also, as they say, in his history records that the Lord Jesus of appearance was joint-eyebrowed, with beautiful eyes, with a long face." Vincent of Beauvais is therefore no independent authority—his copy of John Damascene contained the above-mentioned Appendix, that is all. If we sum up the evidence, it all rests on Andrew of Crete and John of Damascus. Now, it is to be noted that Andrew of Crete was a native of Damascus as well as St. John, and hence was, like him, able to read Josephus in the original Aramaic. The dialect spoken in Damascus in A.D. 700 cannot have differed from the dialect which Josephus wrote more than the English of to-day differs from the English of Chaucer; if, indeed, it differed as much. There is therefore a reasonable chance that their quotation rests on a correct knowledge of the original.

Moreover, the expressions "epirrinos," "prominent-nosed," of Epiphanius, Nicephorus, and the Synodal letter, and MAKROPROSOPON "long-faced," seem to be based on an original Aramaic, "arik-appe." In Aramaic the word "appe" means both nose and face, "arik" means long or extended; hence one translator might easily render "long-faced," and the other "with prominent nose."

So, likewise, SYNOPHRYS, joint eyebrowed, in Andrew of of Crete and St. John of Damascus, and OPHRYS OY PANU EPIKAMPEIS of Epiphanius (eyebrows not at all curved), might both easily represent the Aramaic "Methih-gevinaieh" "extended of eyebrows."

This suspicion that Aramaic is somehow the underlying text receives a strange confirmation from the so-called letter of Lentulus. In some versions of the letter, this weird Lentulus, although designated as the famous Governor of Judea, is spoken of as "*a certain* Lentulus" (*quidam* Lentulus), in others, as P. Lentulus, and again, Publius Lentulus. Yet this Lentulus is obviously Pilatus, and in some MSS. is actually called Pilatus—in one MSS. Pierre l'Apostre! Now, in Aramaic, "a certain," "somebody," "a person," is "pelan." This is used very much as we use N.N., the letter P, with a little stroke after it (P′), is an abbreviation for "somebody." P′ Lentulus is surely only P′ilatus! Even in Pierre l'Apostre we have a quaint blunder for P′latus! If this be so, the Epistle of Lentulus was fabricated by someone with a knowledge of Hebrew or Aramaic!

I suspect, moreover, that "Eutropius the historian," who is mentioned in a number of manuscripts as the finder of this famous forged letter, is in reality Josephus the historian. The two names may not look very much like one another in our latin script, but in Aramaic, Syriac or Hebrew they would not be very dissimilar, Josephus being written "iousipous."

Moreover, the contrast drawn between "the gentiles" and "his disciples" is a contrast which sounds only natural in a Jewish document. Only Jews call the non-Jewish world "gentile." It came naturally to the lips of a Jew, who refers to the non-Jews as GOIIM or "gentes" or gentiles, as we say. Only an originally Jewish document would omit any reference to *Jewish* opinion on Christ; for the writer, being himself a Jew, would give the Jewish opinion as his own, rather than designate it as Jewish. The reference to the Nazarene custom of parting the hair in the middle is more likely to come from a Jew than from a Christian, though it might also come from a Christian. Again, the phrase "propheta veritatis," which Dr. Eisler, I think erroneously, translates "soothsayer," has a Hebrew flavour —Hebrew rarely uses adjectives, but uses the noun in the

genitive instead. A true, a genuine prophet, would naturally be expressed by a Jew as " nebi emet," " propheta veritatis," a prophet of truth, a true prophet.

The most natural translation of the first lines of the letter of Lentulus, combined with the Russian Josephus passage, would be: " At that time also a man came forward, if one may call a man one, whom even gentiles call a true prophet and whom his disciples call the Son of God, as he raised the dead and cured diseases . . . ." If we accept the suggestion of Dr. Eisler, that the letter of Lentulus has some literary connexion with the Josephus passage, we must imagine our mediæval forger or romancer to have dealt most freely with his text, borrowing but a word here and there and manipulating the text almost beyond recognition, and receiving from Josephus barely more than the stimulus to write a description of Christ. According to Dr. Eisler after all only a few words of the Latin description are retained, i.e. (1) " mediocris "—a man of middle size; (2) " quem possent intuentes formidare "—so that those who saw him would get frightened; (3) " discrimen habens in medio capitis juxta morem Nazarenorum "—having a parting in the middle of his head according to the habit of the Nazarenes; (4) " aspectum habens simplicem—having simple looks. The other items: (1) the stooping back; (2) the long face; (3) the prominent nose; (4) the brows growing together; (5) the little hair, are gathered from Theodore the Reader, Andrew of Crete, and St. John Damascene, and are lacking in the Lentulus letter.

The selection of the items retained from the letter cannot but seem somewhat arbitrary.

The most arbitrary selection by Dr. Eisler is certainly his omission of " diligere et " in the sentence " quem possent intuentes *diligere et* formidare." The text runs quite smoothly in the original and is simple and intelligible: " Christ's face was venerable and could inspire both love and awe in the beholders." This plain sentence Dr. Eisler attaches to the adjective SYNOPHRYS, " with eyebrows joined," from Andrew of Crete, and then translates: " with

brows which grew together, so that those who saw him would get frightened"! Surely this is too arbitrary, and the purest guesswork, devoid even of probability, and only prompted by the conviction that Josephus' description must be somehow malicious and contemptuous. The Greek adjective SYNOPHRYS is commonly used to designate not a deformity, but, on the contrary, to note a mark of beauty; for the Greeks it meant straight and long, meeting eyebrows, which were considered exceptionally handsome in men and women. A girl who was SYNOPHRYS was supposed to be very pretty. Moreover, if our previous remarks concerning the text of Epiphanius are correct, Christ's brows were not supposed to grow together, but to be straight and extended. If SYNOPHRYS had conveyed to the Greek reader the idea of a deformity, so great, in fact, that onlookers would get frightened by it, we may be quite certain that Christians would not have repeated it with apparent approval.

It is much more likely that the whole sentence—"with a venerable face which could inspire both love and awe in the beholders"—originated with the compiler of the letter of Lentulus than with Josephus. Surely, if according to Josephus Christ's looks were quite simple, he cannot have credited him with a deformity which frightened onlookers. Josephus would then have said that Christ's features were most unusual indeed, whereas the whole tenor of the passage is that Christ just looked like an ordinary man, so that Josephus would not call him an angel.

The same objection of tendentious translation may be brought against Dr. Eisler's rendering of EPIKYPHOS, "with a stooping back"! The word may refer to someone who habitually bends the neck forward as well as to one who habitually bends the spine or the back. It simply means "bending forward." Epiphanius, who, no doubt, had this description before him, freely renders that Christ usually bent His neck forward and down to be kind and amiable with men. We all know that to have one's chin in the air is a mark of haughtiness. Of course, this is only a slight variation of meaning, still we must avoid the suggestion of any

deformity and anything which interferes with ordinary, simple looks. Dr. Eisler omits EYOPHTHALMOS, "with fine eyes." Why, we do not understand, considering it is the second adjective in Andrew of Crete.

That the Josephus passage originally contained a short description of Christ, to substantiate his remark that Christ looked like an ordinary man, not an angel, or the Son of God, is, on the whole, very likely; but there is no reason for selecting only the disparaging adjectives from the available sources, and construe from these a somewhat repulsive picture. I would rather suggest: "A man of middle size, but well-grown, somewhat bent forward, with bright eyes and a prominent nose, and full long eyebrows, with little hair, parting it in the middle as the Nazarenes do."

Being convinced that Josephus must have given some adequate explanation for his hesitancy in speaking of Jesus as mere man, I would, with every reserve and only tentatively restore the whole Josephus passage, as follows:

> At that time also there arose a man, Jesus, styled "The Messias," a man of great power, if one may call a man, him whom even the gentiles call a true prophet and his disciples call the Son of God. His being and figure were indeed human, he was of middle size, but well-grown, somewhat bent forward, with bright eyes and a prominent nose, with full long eyebrows, but with little hair, parting it in the middle as the Nazarenes do. Yet his pose was more than human, and his works were divine, as he worked miracles astounding and mighty. Hence I cannot call him a (mere) man, but again, on general grounds, I would not call him an angel either, though he worked everything through some invisible power, and worked by word and command. Some of our people said of him that he was our first lawgiver, Moses, risen from the dead, as he showed forth many healings and achievements. But others thought that he was sent by God.

Although we therefore differ from Dr. Eisler in his *Reconstruction*, we fully acknowledge that the merit of the brilliant

suggestion that Lentulus and Andrew of Crete contained words missing in Josephus entirely belongs to him, and should it finally prove to be correct, we may well call his suggestion a flash of genius.

Some readers may ask : Do we possess no means of control to ascertain whether this description of Josephus actually tallies with the appearance of Our Lord ?

No ; I fear we have not. There is a very early story of a statue of Our Lord, erected at Paneas (Caesarea-Philippi) by the woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment and was cured. The statue was certainly held to represent Christ, A.D. 300, but it has perished, and we do not know what it looked like. There is a very early legend, traceable to about A.D. 400, of a picture of Our Lord sent to Abgar of Edessa. Whatever truth there may be in this legend, the picture itself is no longer traceable with historical certainty, though a picture, purporting to be Abgar's picture, is still shown in Rome. There is the Cloth of Veronica in Rome—whatever its historical value may be, the outlines of Our Lord's face, still visible upon it, are so vague, so darkened and obscured, and so represent Him in His sufferings, that practically no conclusion can be drawn as to the details of Our Lord's features.

There is, of course, a traditional face of Our Lord, but how far does this tradition go back ? Did the early Christians intend to give a portrait of Our Lord in the little statue of the Good Shepherd, where the figure is one of a young beardless man with curly hair ? Surely not.

The early Christians nowhere, as far as we know, claimed to have a correct portrait of Our Lord. Later on the desire to have His features arose, but apparently it was not much countenanced. The Marcosians, in the second century, are said to have had statues of Our Lord in their religious meetings, but the Marcosians were Gnostic heretics, not orthodox Christians. A Roman Emperor, Alexander Severus, put a statue of Our Lord amongst the worthies and religious heroes of antiquity ; but we know not whether it was merely an idealized figure or a faithful representation. Widespread

is the story of the man in the fifth century, who dared to portray Our Lord with the features of Zeus, and whose hand withered in punishment till the Patriarch Gennadius cured him. Constantia, the Emperor Constantine's Arian sister and widow of Licinius, in a letter asked Eusebius of Caesarea for a picture of Our Lord. He wrote back most indignantly that he did not know what sort of picture she wanted. How could the glory of Christ be represented by dead and lifeless colours ?

> I do not know [so he wrote] how some woman, holding in her hand two portraits as if of philosophers, jerked out something about these being portraits of Paul and the Saviour. I could not tell you where she got them from or where she obtained her information. However, lest she or others should be scandalized, I took them away from her and kept them myself, not thinking it right that these things should be carried about to others, lest it might seem in the opinion of idolators that we carry about our God in an image.

From this it is plain that about A.D. 300 there can have been no universally recognized portrait of Our Lord, and if there was none then, we cannot truly speak of a traditional portrait—at least not one whose tradition goes back to the days of Christ.

VI

THE JEWS OUTSIDE PALESTINE IN THE DAYS OF CHRIST

The scattering of the Jewish race over the face of the earth began as early as 734 B.C., when Tiglath Pileser III, the terrible Assyrian conqueror, began the first deportation of Israelites from Northern Galilee. Twelve years later, Samaria, the northern capital, was taken, and deportations began on a gigantic scale. When Jerusalem fell, a hundred and fifty years later, Nabuchodonosor caused the Southern Jews to emigrate in thousands till the country became almost a wilderness. Cyrus, the Persian, allowed large caravans of Jews to return to their country, and so did subsequent Persian monarchs, but we may rest assured that the bulk of the deported multitudes remained in the country of their forcible adoption. In the days of Jeremias the Prophet, great numbers of Jews went into voluntary exile in Egypt, and formed self-contained communities on the Nile. They even built a temple of Jahveh at Elephantine, and could boast that Cambyses the Conqueror, though he destroyed so many Egyptian temples in 525 B.C., left the temple of Jahveh, on the Nile, untouched. Some two hundred years later Alexander the Great, in founding his new city of Alexandria, established there a large Jewish colony, which continued to play its part in municipal affairs for more than a millennium. The successors of Alexander in Egypt and Syria, and apparently also in Asia Minor, followed the same policy as that of their great predecessor.

Antioch and Tarsus had large Jewish wards, as Alexandria had. The strictly Latin or Roman world came into contact with Jews considerably later. It causes us some surprise that about 300 B.C. the name of the city of Jerusalem was

unknown to the average Roman, and when he heard it, it seemed a weird, barbarous name to him. The fall of Corinth in 146 B.C., and the surrender of Pergamum in 133 B.C., changed everything in the eastern Mediterranean. In the year 138 B.C., the Roman Senate, having received an embassy from Simon the Maccabee, sent a circular letter to the kings of Egypt, Syria Pergamum, Cappadocia, Parthia, and to a number of provinces, towns and islands, requesting the favour of these monarchs and states for the Jewish population in their states. Evidently considerable Jewish communities must have existed in all these places.

So great was the Jewish population in Egypt in those days, that the son of the high priest Onias IV, when he realized that owing to the persecution of Antiochus he could not exercise his office in Jerusalem, sought refuge under Ptolemy VI of Egypt, and built a temple at Leontopolis, not far from the present Cairo. In this temple Jewish worship continued uninterruptedly for 230 years, till the Romans closed it in A.D. 73 on account of a Jewish rebellion. The extension of the Jewish *diaspora* is well portrayed by St. Luke in the Acts. On Pentecost there were present in Jerusalem Jews from Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphilia, Egypt, Libya, Cyrene, Crete, Arabia, and Rome, with others from the whole Orient and Italy. Gaul, Africa and Spain are indeed not mentioned, but this need not imply there were no Jews in those parts, because Greece is not mentioned either, and yet it contained many Jewish communities. The enu eration of localities is evidently based on the difference of languages or dialects. On the other hand, mere distance must have made the attendance of Jews from Gaul, Africa and Spain somewhat rare at Whitsuntide, even if they came for Passover.

The importance of the Jewish population in Eastern lands in the days of Our Blessed Lord can be gauged from the story told by Josephus about Babylonia and Parthia in the first years of the Christian era. Two Jewish brothers, weaver apprentices in Neerda, on the Euphrates, struck

against their employer. They managed to obtain some arms, gathered together other young Jews from the riff-raff of the town, who likewise secured some arms, and formed themselves into a robber band. This robber band, under the leadership of the two brothers, raised a regular tax on the cattle of the farmers all around, and constituted themselves a permanent authority over the countryside. A local governor, who gave them battle, was beaten out of the field. The Parthian King Artaban, making a virtue a necessity, concluded peace with them, and left them governors over a large district. For fifteen years they ruled almost as independent sovereigns, all the affairs of Mesopotamia were in their hands. The greatest Persian nobles vied with one another in subservience to these great Jewish potentates. At last fate overtook them. One of the brothers fell in love with the wife of a Persian General. In order to secure this woman, he made war on her husband, killed him and took her. This aroused anger everywhere, even among the Jews, for the lady practised her pagan rites in the house of her new and Jewish husband. The other brother tried to interfere, but she put poison in his food and killed him. Her husband now reigned alone, and led his armies against Mithridates, the king's son-in-law, and devastated the district of which he was governor. Mithridates was defeated, and having been captured alive, he was paraded riding naked on a donkey, but for fear of his royal father-in-law his life was spared. Mithridates again risked the chance of war, and this time gained a great victory. A great slaughter was made and many thousands fell. Our Jew-Napoleon gathered a new army and threw himself into Neerda. His raw levies were undisciplined and ravaged the countryside. The populace rose against them, and sided with Mithridates against their oppressors. The Babylonians succeeded in killing the Jewish tyrant in a drunken brawl. The people started massacring the Jews everywhere. They fled to Seleucia for protection. Even at Seleucia the two sections of the population, the Greeks and the Syrians, forgetting their former feuds, combined against the Jews,

and fell upon them, killing some fifty thousand. A miserable remnant fled again to Neerda and Nisibis, where they lived in comparative safety.

When one reads such accounts, and when one remembers that the Jews were able to massacre 220,000 Gentiles in the Cyrenaica and 420,000 in Cyprus some two generations later, one gathers that in the East the number of Jews outside Palestine must have exceeded several million, and that they were always on the worst terms with their neighbours. The Roman world they entered later, and pervaded in a much slower fashion, but soon roused strong antipathies.

Even the meek and unoffending Mandeans looked upon the Jews as their great enemies, their great persecutors. The history of the Mandeans is as yet too obscure to be quite certain when they first came into contact with the Jews, but their sufferings from the Jews seemed to have burnt themselves into their national consciousness. Apparently they never read the Old Testament, though they regarded Adam and Eve as the first parents of the human race, and made—strange to say—Abel, Seth and Enos a kind of redeeming triad of mankind, Abel especially being the saviour of man.

A most instructive story, illustrating the power of Jewry in that part of the world, is the conversion of Izates, King of Adiabene, and Helena, the queen-mother, and Izates' forty-eight children, twenty-four sons and twenty-four daughters, to the Jewish faith. Ananias, a Jewish merchant, had converted the harem of King Abennerig to the Jewish faith, and even persuaded Izates, who was staying at that king's palace, to embrace Judaism. Another Jew had converted Helena, his mother, the wife of Monobazus, King of Adiabene. On succeeding to the throne after Monobazus' death, Izates was anxious to be circumcised, so as to enter fully into Jewish privileges. At first both Ananias and Helena, Izates' mother, were opposed to this step, as too provocative of the non-Jewish population, but Eleazar, a Jew from Galilee, persuaded Izates, who submitted to circumcision. Of his twenty-four sons, five were educated

at Jerusalem. His mother made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and her son accompanied her a long way. His mother and the king himself spent large sums in relieving the famine in Palestine. They built palaces in the neighbourhood of the Holy City, and both Izates and Helena were finally buried there at *the Three Columns*, just outside the city. We have at least two more examples of kinglets, who were circumcised about this time—Azir of Homs and Polemon of Cilicia—in order to be able to marry Jewish wives, the sisters of Agrippa II.

In 139 B.C. ambassadors of Simon the Maccabee obtained a decision of the Roman Senate acknowledging the independence of the Jewish State, and the authority of the high priest over the Jews wherever they lived within the then already extensive Roman dominions. These ambassadors, however, or other Jews at Rome, made themselves somehow objectionable in the Eternal City, for in the same year Hispalus, the praetor for aliens, forced them to return to their country. There must have been a considerable number of Jews in Italy in 62 B.C., for they sent great sums of money from "Italy" yearly to Jerusalem. Pompey, after his conquest of Jerusalem in 63 B.C., sent many Jews to Rome as captives, and they were sold in the Eternal City as slaves. As these slaves made themselves impossible to their masters by their clinging to Jewish law, the observance of the Sabbath, the refusal of Not-Kosher food, and so on, they were comparatively soon manumitted. These manumitted slaves, or *libertini*, were the bulk, apparently, of the Roman Jewish population, they flocked together in what is now Trastevere, the *regio Transtiberina*, the slums of the city, and used for the meaner industries of the place. Julius Caesar was the great friend of the Jews. After his death on March 15, 44 B.C., the Jews wept and mourned round his funeral pyre for many nights. Cicero, from his earliest days, had been imbued with anti-Jewish sentiments. At Rhodes he had, as a youth, followed the lectures of Apollonius Molon, who added to his philosophical writings polemical treatises against the Jews. He was a great admirer of Posidonius, who also

taught at Rhodes, and whose aversion from "the ridiculous superstition" of the Jews was notorious. In Cicero's days Alexander Polyhistor, the Greek captive, who had received Roman citizen rights from Sulla, and who lived in Rome at the time, wrote his treatise about the Jews. Pompey had conquered Jerusalem in Cicero's later years, and Cicero could call him affectionately: *hierosolymitarius noster*—"our big Jerusalem-man."

Now, Rome's greatest orator in 56 B.C., three to four years after the capture of Jerusalem, had to defend Flaccus against Laelius. This Flaccus had been pro-praetor of Asia in the year 62 B.C., and stood now impeached of mal-administration, tyranny, and malappropriation of funds. He was supposed to have robbed the Jews of great sums. Cicero, speaking in his defence, came to this item in the indictment, and said:

> Finally, there comes the famous grievance about the gold of the Jews. No doubt that this is the reason why this lawsuit had to be dealt with in this court of Aurelius (in the most turbulent quarter of Rome). This item of the accusation made you, Laelius, choose this quarter and this crowd—you know how numerous these gentry are—how they cling together, what pressure they can bring to bear in assemblies. I shall lower my voice while pleading, speaking just loud enough that the judges can hear me, for there are persons enough to rouse people against me and against the best citizens, and I have no wish to make it easy for them.
>
> Considering that this gold was exported annually from Italy and all the provinces to Jerusalem for the benefit of the Jews, Flaccus forbade, by edict, any gold to be exported from Asia (i.e. the Roman province Asia, the extreme west of Asia Minor). Judges! who is there who would not commend him for this measure? The exportation of gold has been forbidden many a time by the Senate for grave reasons, especially during my consulate. Now, to put a stop to this barbarous superstition (of

Judaism) is a mark of energy, to flout the multitude of the Jews, so often causing trouble in our assemblies, for the sake of the common weal, was a token of singular strength of character. But C. Pompey, the conqueror of Jerusalem, touched nothing in their temple, you might object. True, on this and on many other occasions, he gave a great proof of wisdom, in not affording his detractors any grounds of complaint in a city so suspicious and evil-spoken. For indeed, I do not suppose that the famous General was influenced by scruples regarding the Jewish religion, but by a motive of self-respect. What then, is supposed to be the point of the accusation ?

Cicero then repels the suggestion of secrecy or theft. All was done publicly and above board, the moneys are accounted for in the Public Treasury.

The whole affair [he continued] is an attempt to arouse hatred. Your speech was not meant for the judges, but addressed to the public—to the crowd Laelius, every country has its own religion, and we have ours. Even when Jerusalem was independent, and the Jews lived in peace with us, their kind of worship was hardly in accordance with the splendour of this Empire, the dignity of the Roman name and the customs of our ancestors, how much less now, that that nation has shown by war what she thinks of our rule, and what the immortal gods care about her, conquered, uprooted and reduced to slavery as she is.

If Cicero and the Republican party were strongly anti-Jewish, the Jews obtained a champion and an admirer in no less a person than Marcus Agrippa, the greatest admiral of his time, the lifelong friend and the son-in-law of the Emperor Augustus. Marcus Agrippa, after the Emperor the greatest personage in the Empire, in fact, for a time practically Viceroy in the East, the man whose name, after almost two thousand years, still stands written on the Pantheon for every traveller to Rome to read, was a close

acquaintance of Herod the Great, king of Judea, and used every opportunity to favour the Jews.

As an example of the partiality of the Roman imperial authorities for the Jews, or at least for Herod, one might point to the fate of the Gadarenes, whose name is familiar to every reader of the Gospels from the Gadarene swine. They went to Agrippa, at Mitylene, on the island of Lesbos, to complain of Herod having plundered their temple. Agrippa refused to confer with the Gadarene deputies, and sent them in chains back to Herod. Three years later, in 20 B.C., deputies from the same city went to Augustus himself with their grievance, but the Emperor received them so angrily that out of fear of being delivered to Herod, as was the deputation to Agrippa, they committed suicide.

In 15 B.C. Agrippa himself came to Jerusalem to visit Herod, and brought sacrifices and offerings to the Jewish temple. In the following year Herod paid a return visit to Agrippa, in Sinope, on the Black Sea, assisted him in his campaign in the Crimea, and travelled back with him to Ephesus. He succeeded in obtaining from Agrippa a decree confirming all Jewish privileges, which they had received in the days of Julius Caesar, and which they possessed in the cities, Ephesus, Sardes, Pergamum, Laodicea, Halicarnassus and Delos, and elsewhere. Agrippa, the great friend and protector of the Jewish race, died twelve years before Christ's birth. The Greeks of the Ionian cities endeavoured to deprive the Jews of equal citizen-rights with themselves unless they, the Jews, conformed to their pagan rites; but Agrippa had always withstood them. Nicolas, a lawyer of Damascus, a councillor of Herod, pleaded so eloquently for the Jews, that they won the day. The same lawyer spoke so well at Rome before Augustus, that he confirmed Archelaus as ethnarch of the Jews, and the Emperor promised him further dignities, if he proved worthy of them, but Archelaus showed himself in every way a worthless character.

The Jews in Egypt were even more powerful than those in Asia Minor. Let us quote Strabo of Amasea, a contemporary of Our Blessed Lord. He is speaking of the Cyrenaica, a

district to the West of Egypt, almost where Tripoli now is, and says:

> There are four classes of the population: the citizens, the peasants, the resident aliens and the Jews. These last have penetrated in every country, and it would be hard to find anywhere in the whole world a single place that has not had to put up with this race, and in which it did not obtain the mastery. The Cyrenaica, being under the same governors as Egypt, has copied its neighbour in many ways, and particularly in favouring colonies of Jews, who have kept on increasing, while observing their national laws. Now, in Egypt, the Jews have received separate districts in which to settle, and in the city of Alexandria a considerable quarter of the town has been assigned to this nation. An ethnarch is placed over them, who administers the affairs of the nation, adjudicates in lawsuits, surveys the fulfilment of contracts and regulations, exactly as if he ruled an independent state. Thus, this nation has become mighty in Egypt, because the Jews originally lived there.

The Jews in Egypt seem to have disposed of immense sums of money. During the troubles of Ptolemy Lathyrus, they brought no less a sum than 800 talents to the island of Cos in safe deposit. This sum would be close on two million pounds according to the present value of money. With the death of Augustus imperial favour of the Jews had an end. Tiberius, his successor, drove the Jews from Rome in the very beginning of his reign. Sejanus, his notorious Prime Minister, was a fierce enemy of their race, and urged the Emperor to extreme measures. Under the pretence of sending purple and gold to the Temple, four Jews had obtained money from a wealthy woman, Fulvia, the wife of Saturnus. Her husband complained to Tiberius, who acted with severity. The Jews of Rome had to burn their praying shawls, their armlets and frontlets and synagogue furniture, and were exiled from the city. Four thousand of them were deported to Sardinia to serve in the army, which was sup-

pressing brigandage in that island. The Sardinian climate was very bad. Many of the deported were sure to die; good riddance, said the authorities, the more the better. Those that escaped forced military service underwent almost equal hardships elsewhere. After the fall of Sejanus in A.D. 31, imperial policy changed. Jewish privileges granted by Julius Caesar and Augustus were restored, and the Jews returned to Rome. To this change of policy the disgrace of Pontius Pilate is no doubt partially due. Pilate had been appointed by Sejanus, and would, in consequence, treat the Jews in a high-handed way, though Tiberius was shrewd enough to distinguish between an attack on Jewish colonies scattered in Italy and the Jewish race in its stronghold of Palestine.

The mad emperor Caius during his short reign did nothing against the Jews. He had Agrippa, who later became king of the Jews, as his boon companion, before the death of Tiberius, and as far as his mad brain allowed, no doubt intended to favour them. By suspending the law against "Benevolent Societies" he indirectly favoured the Jewish brotherhood.

Towards the end of his rule Caius threatened a great calamity for the Jews in Palestine and abroad. Everywhere he wished statues to himself erected, and worshipped with divine honours. Even in the temple at Jerusalem he ordered an image to be set and adored. As he foresaw serious trouble in Palestine, he commanded Petronius, the legate of Syria, to proceed with his army towards Judea and enforce compliance with his decree. Petronius marched his legions to Ptolomais, but then, appalled by the magnitude of the issue, he withdrew. He wrote to Caius reminding him of what his step involved. King Agrippa did his very best to dissuade his former friend. Caius wrote a furious epistle to Petronius, but it only reached him after the assassination of the Emperor. In Egypt Caius' order gave rise to civil disturbances and fierce riots. The Jews abstained from paying homage to the new statues of Caius, publicly erected. The pagan populace, which detested the Jews, thought that

their chance had arrived to vent their spite on people who were now under the frown of the Government. The Jews sent an embassy to Rome to ask for protection. They were led by the aged Philo, brother of Alexander, the Alabarch or chief collector of taxes in Egypt. The Alexandrians sent an embassy with Apion at its head. At length they met the imperial madman in his gardens at Rome. He was inspecting some buildings in course of erection. He scarcely listened to their pleadings, and darted off every moment in some building to settle some architectural detail. The Alexandrians said that the Jews never offered sacrifice for the Emperor. The Jews indignantly retorted that they had had solemn sacrifices for him when he was ill, and when he started out on the war. "Yes; but those sacrifices were to someone else, not to me," jerked out the Emperor, and dashed off again. When he again remembered their presence, for they humbly followed him, he suddenly said: "What is the precise reason why you people don't eat pork?" Every nation has its own food laws, answered the deputation But the Emperor had not stayed to listen. Finally, he left the matter undecided, saying that these Jews were more to be pitied than anything else for not realizing his inborn divinity. The murder of the Emperor left the matter in suspense, but Claudius, his successor, was known to be of pro-Jewish sympathies. The Jews in Alexandria took their revenge, and the bloody riots continued. Alexandrians and Jews sent an embassy to the new Emperor Some Alexandrian envoys behaved so insolently to the Emperor, speaking of him to one another as a fool, and even to his face taunting him with some intrigue with a Jewess called Salome, that the Emperor had them put to death. Yet Claudius tried at least to keep the balance straight. A proof of this is a document recently discovered, viz. a letter of the emperor in which he grants or refuses some particular petitions of the Alexandrians, and then continues as follows:

> With regard to the disturbances and the sedition, or I should rather say, the war that has been started between

you and the Jews, the question has been mooted as to which of the two parties originated it. Although your ambassadors, and especially Denys Theon's son, have argued most fiercely about it, and were contradicted by their opponents, I did not wish to push the enquiry any further, but to whosoever restarts this quarrel I reserve my ruthless anger. I tell you plainly that, unless you cease this baneful fury against one another, I shall have to show you what it means to drive a prince of kindly dispositions to righteous anger. Thus, once more, I beseech the Alexandrians to behave with mildness and humanity towards the Jews, who have been their fellow townsmen for so long, and not to disturb any of their customary practises in honour of the divinity, and to let them follow their customs as they existed in the days of Augustus, and as I, after hearing both sides, have confirmed them. On the other hand I formally forbid the Jews to try and increase their privileges, and never again to attempt such an unheard-of thing as to send a separate delegation as if you lived in different cities; not to try and interfere in the games organized by the officers of the games or the director, but to be satisfied with their own revenues, and as inhabitants of a city, which is not their own, to profit by its abundant prosperity; lastly to refrain from inviting, or to cause to immigrate, Jews from Syria and Egypt, as this would rouse my gravest suspicions.

If this is not complied with, I shall punish them in every way as people, who cause a pest everywhere throughout the world.

It has been recently suggested that in the ending of this imperial rescript we had the first extant allusion to Christians, the pestilential people referred to being none other than the followers of Christ. But this suggestion is surely gratuitous, as there is really nothing in the actual wording which supports it. On the other hand, there can practically be no doubt that some years later Claudius came into contact with the Christians in Rome. Dio Cassius, the historian,

tells us that the Jews had grown so numerous in Rome that Claudius could not expel them without causing great disturbances on account of their number, but though he did not expel them, he forbade them to meet together, and the benevolent societies sanctioned by Caius he dissolved. In other words, wholesale deportations, like those under Nero, had become inadvisable. No doubt most of their leaders were exiled, but no other expulsions took place, and their synagogues, which served as meeting places and were registered as benevolent society premises, were closed. This, one would think, is the meaning of St. Luke's words : " Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome," i.e. all Jews of note, though he left the poor in their squalid quarters across the Tiber. Suetonius, referring to the same incident, writes that Claudius expelled the Jews, who were " continually rioting through some agitator called Chrestus." Now, we know that the Christians were popularly called Chrestians. The two Greek words *Christos* (anointed) and *Chrestos* (useful) were hardly distinguishable in pronunciation. The latter being a common slave name would more naturally suggest itself to the populace. As we learn from St. Luke that two Christians of Rome—Aquila and Priscilla —were involved in Claudius' decree of exile, and as we know from St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans that in A.D. 58 the faith of the Roman Christians was proclaimed through all the world, it seems almost imperative to see in Chrestus a mistaken spelling for Christus. Suetonius, or rather Suetonius' authority, whoever he was, may have heard that the troubles were due to someone called Christ, and not known that the Christ of the Christians had been crucified twenty years before.

The Jews themselves, however, did their utmost to dispel any error concerning their identity with Christians. I mean those who were not converted to Christianity, for we must not forget that vast numbers were thus converted. The others became the bitterest opponents to Christianity, and were the very soul of the repressive measures taken against the followers of Jesus of Nazareth.

Besides the influence which the Jews exercised as an international confraternity of great financial abilities and strong racial coherence, they possessed a remarkable power of attraction on their neighbours in many lands through their religion. They were the carriers of an ethical monotheism, immeasurably superior to the confused polytheism of the masses. Horace and kindred spirits might scoff at the *curti Judaei*, but thinking and religious people, who were disgusted by the multiplication of gods and goddesses in that syncretist age, turned wistfully to an ancient religion, which since time immemorial had taught a spiritual and ethical monotheism of great sublimity. Moreover, the Jews of the first century outside Palestine were great propagandists. It was Christian rivalry in the missionfield which made Jews the bitter opponents of the followers of the Nazarene. Jewish intellectual and religious influence on the pagan world at the rise of Christianity will form an adequate theme for the next chapter.

VII

JEWISH RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE

JUDAISM exercised on the Pagan mind of Christ's day the most extraordinary fascination and at the same time it produced the most intense repulsion. It is not at all difficult to find in the Classics a series of quotations expressing a fierce hatred and contempt. There are, first of all, the expressions of ignorant malevolence. The most noteworthy no doubt is that the Jews worshipped the figure of an ass. How this queer story found credence is a puzzle to historians, but that it was believed not merely by the lower classes, but by cultured folk, cannot be gainsaid. Tacitus most gravely gives us the origin of the Jewish race, as told by responsible historians, in this way. The Egyptian Pharaoh Bochoris had expelled a set of lepers out of the country and driven them into the desert. Moses, a priest of Heliopolis, had become their leader and brought them into Palestine. The natives of Palestine were driven out, and the Jews built Jerusalem and its temple. Amongst the new customs and rites introduced by Moses was the worship of an ass in the Holy of holies. To this ass rams and oxen were sacrificed in derision of Amon, the chief Egyptian god. The reason of the ass-cult was this. When the Jews in the desert were perishing from thirst, Moses had seen a herd of wild asses run to a wooded rock and on following them had found water.

This story, however absurd, betrays by the very attempt to explain the worship of the ass, that it was not merely vulgar abuse. Apion, the opponent of Judaism, who was the spokesman of the pagan Alexandrian embassy to Caius, maintains that the Seleucid king, Antiochus Epiphanes, actually found a golden ass's head in the Holy of holies at

Jerusalem. If we except the high-priest, no Jew, let alone a pagan, had ever seen the inside of the Holy of holies; it meant death for any non-Jew to enter the temple-precincts. In these circumstances, it is not unnatural that strange stories should be believed about what was hidden behind the great curtain. It is sometimes said that the story originally stood in the history of Posidonius, a famous writer and friend of Cicero, and thus spread throughout the intelligentsia of the Hellenistic world. The striking fact remains that Pompey, when some ten years before the death of Posidonius he entered into the Temple at Jerusalem, had seen no golden ass's head, as the Holy of holies was a perfectly empty locality, and the same Tacitus who tells the tale of the ass worship also tells us that Pompey found the Jerusalem sanctuary empty.

Considering that later the same accusation of worshipping an ass's head was brought against the Christians and apparently widely believed, it is not easy to discover how precisely the calumny arose. We must not forget that the worship of gods with animal heads was common in Egypt and that therefore the accusation appeared not so utterly absurd in the first century as it does in ours.

None of the attempted explanations is quite satisfactory. Not improbable is the suggestion that, considering that "ONOS," the Greek word for ass, is also used for an upper mill-stone, the rumour arose from the stone, the Eben shethija, which in the post-exilian temple was the only object in the Holy of holies. More probable, perhaps, that the confusion arose through the similarity of the Hebrew name "Ana" (pronounced Oana) to the Greek "ONOC" for ass. There was certainly a Palestinian god Baal Ana, worshipped at Dora. Tacitus' ingenious explanation of the Ass, or Onos-cult, seems derived from a text in Genesis (xxxvi, 24). "This is Ana, who found the hot springs in the wilderness when he fed the asses of Sibeon, his father." There certainly existed a Gnostic sect with a god called ONOEL. There is an early gem on which is engraved an ass standing, cloaked in a toga, holding a book and instructing two dis-

ciples. The cult of a Pagan Palestinian sect was mistakenly attributed to the Jews themselves. From the Jews, as Tertullian says, it was transferred to the Christians.

Apart from this foolish accusation there was in Judaism much which revolted the Græco-Roman mind. There was circumcision. It seemed to the cultured people of those days a barbaric rite, a degrading mutilation, a piece of unnatural folly. It is true Egyptian priests were also circumcised, but this affected but few individuals; the Jewish custom affected a whole race. As a matter of fact, the Romans legislated even for the Egyptian priesthood, restricting the practice as much as possible. If the Jew referred with disdain to the uncircumcised Gentiles, the Gentiles paid them back a full measure of contempt, and could hardly refer to Jews without some derisive allusion to their mutilation.

There was the extraordinary religious aloofness of the Jews. The first century was one of universal religious tolerance. Every and any religious cult might be professed and practised, provided always that one respected one's neighbour's religion as good as one's own. It was quite right to worship one's national gods and to follow one's ancestral religion, but then an occasional act of obeisance and reverence towards the local deities of the country where one was staying was expected, and above all an acknowledgment of the great gods of Rome and the Imperial cult. Greeks and Romans would not have minded Jehovah in the least, as long as he was satisfied to take his place with Zeus, Apollo, Venus, Isis, Mithra, Cybele and the others. The Jew loathed and abominated every religion but his own. His very presence was a rebuke, as if the worship of the whole human race were something unholy, foul and unclean. The Jews let the Gentiles feel that they considered themselves contaminated by the ceremonies of paganism. The Jews in the big towns naturally drifted together and formed a Jewish quarter. They formed an alien settlement, an extraneous substance in the body politic. They were a race apart with special privileges, with ethnarchs of their own, with exemption from military service on account of

their sabbath observance. All this irritated the common man. Why should this oriental, who was not allowed to eat pork, not allowed to eat any meats except slaughtered in some special way, not allowed to work on one day in seven, not allowed to share in those harmless ceremonies, which, I dare say meant nothing, but which were bound up with the ordinary civilities of daily life—why should such a man be a sort of privileged citizen?

Though they had much which was repellent they had much which attracted anyone who had some instinct for religion.

They possessed their synagogues throughout the whole extent of the Roman empire. How many synagogues there were would be difficult to say, but we may rest assured that every commercial centre, every seaport town, had its Jewish proseuche or prayer house, as it was called, though in the country few Jews were found. Matters stood in the first centuries very much as they stand in the twentieth. The number of Jews to-day is often given as about twelve millions. Strange to say, the race seems barely to have doubled its numbers in these two thousand years. The Jewish synagogues were centres of propaganda, they were devoted to the public recital and explanation of the Law. The Pentateuch had been translated into Greek about 251 B.C., the remaining books of the Bible gradually between 250 and 130 B.C., so that the Jewish scriptures were available to all. The Jewish synagogues were in many instances imposing buildings, and the worship conducted in them must have been very attractive to the spiritually minded amongst the heathen. That these synagogues attracted attention and were spoken of by the people is plain from the jests of Juvenal. A drunken reveller at night is supposed to pick a quarrel with a pedestrian, whom he chances to meet on his road home. He addresses his unfortunate victim thus: "Where do you come from? With whose vinegar and beans have you been filling your belly? With what cobbler have you been eating leeks and greasy sheep's head? Speak up, or I'll kick you! Say, where do you live? In what prayer-house (proseuche) can I find you?" (*Sat.* III, 292)

The Jewish synagogues had this advantage over the pagan temples, that in the synagogues some teaching, instruction of some kind, was given, ancient books recited and explained, simple prayers sung, whereas the pagan priesthood was not a teaching priesthood ; there was, in a sense, nothing to teach ; there was an elaborate and often unintelligible ceremonial, a series of rites that had no other recommendation than that they were customary and old. There were indeed pagan schools of philosophy ; public lectures were given in defence and explanation of Stoic, Academic, Peripatetic or Epicurean systems, but they were independent of temple-worship, and, I fancy, altogether above the heads of the average man. A Stoic or Platonic professor might be very serious in his desire for spreading his convictions for the good of the souls of the people, but only a small clique of the wealthy were influenced by them. The Jewish religious system, taught the existence of a personal, though invisible and infinite God, a rewarder of good and punisher of evil in this life and in the life beyond. A religious system which confidently taught the resurrection of the dead, exercised a great influence on all those whom it could reach in some way.

Juvenal, in his fourteenth *Satire*, deplores but does not deny the fact that amongst the younger folk "Some that have had the bad luck of possessing a father who observes the sabbaths adore nothing but the clouds and the deity of heaven, and think there is but slight difference in sacredness between human flesh and the pork of which their father abstains, soon also they will be circumcised. While they are accustomed to have a contempt for Roman customs, they learn to observe and dread Jewish Law, whatever Moses has handed down in his secret book, that means, not to show the way to a stranger unless he be of the same religion, not to point out a well to an enquirer unless he be circumcised. And on every seventh day the father has a lazy time and leads only a half a life."

The bewildering multiplicity of gods and goddesses and the wild confusion of obscene or puerile legends, had driven many people in the days of Christ back to the thought

of the unity of the Godhead underlying all manifestations of the divine. This craving of the human mind and heart for the One God was only half satisfied by the Pantheistic speculations of the philosophic schools. The infinite, eternal, purely spiritual, yet living and personal God of the Jews exercised a strong influence on those whose desire for real religion had forced them to consider even Judaism as a possible answer to their religious problems. In this way Judaism profited by the absolute syncretism which prevailed in those days. Worshippers of the Most High seem to have been very numerous in the Hellenistic world. These Hypsistarians, from the Greek word "Hypsistos," which means "most high," were to be found scattered everywhere, but they were especially prominent in Asia Minor. There can be little doubt that these Hypsistarians are to be brought into some connection with Judaism. The Hebrew term for Hypsistos is Elyon. Melchisedek is called in Genesis a worshipper of God Elyon, the Most High God. In Jewish literature just before and after Christ the term Hypsistos is most frequent, it occurs some fifty times in Ecclesiasticus, and can be found scores of times in Apocryphal books written within a few generations of Christ's birth. Hypsistarians as a recognised religious sect existed in Bithynia, Pontus and in Cappadocia till the end of the fourth century of our era. The similarity in sound between the name of the Asianic deity Zeus Sabasios and the Lord Sabaoth of the Jews also led to an assimilation of the two deities in the popular mind. There can be no doubt that the name I A O, I A Ω, so often used in connection with Gnostic and Magic texts, stands for Jaho, i.e. Jahveh or Jehovah of the Old Testament. Even the pagan oracle of Klaros proclaimed: "The highest god of all I declare to be I A Ω."

This brings us to the extraordinary vogue which Jewish wizardry apparently had in those days. Well-known is the description of Juvenal of the superstitious woman of his time. She is the victim of all sorts of religious mountebanks. She is also visited by a Jewess, a palsied old hag, who gives herself the grandiloquent title of "Interpres legum

Solymarum et magna sacerdos Arboris ac summi internuntia Coeli."—"The interpreter of the laws of Jerusalem, the great priestess of the woods, and the trusted messenger of high heaven."

For a few coppers, says Juvenal, Jews will sell you all sorts of dreams.

Juvenal gives one the impression that these Jewish gentry were only the abjectly poor. The above mentioned messenger from high heaven had to leave "her basket and her dirty parcel" behind before being admitted into the lady's drawing room. But Juvenal had in his mind the actual state of Jewry in Rome in his own time. The emperor Domitian loathed the Jews and had driven them out of Rome and crushed them with taxes. The sacred wood and well outside Rome, where, according to the old legend, king Numa met the nymph Egeria, was in Juvenal's day infested with begging Jews, who were made to pay rent even for the hovels in which they herded with their foul belongings. This, however, was but local or temporary. Not all Jews live always in Whitechapel, any more in the first century than in the twentieth. A more successful side of their trade in magic is shown us in the story told by Josephus.

"Solomon composed incantations by which distempers are alleviated, and he left behind him the manner of using exorcisms by which they drive away demons, so that they never return; and this method of cure is of great force unto this day; for I have seen a great man of my own country, whose name was Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacal in the presence of Vespasian and his sons and his captains and the whole multitude of his soldiers. The manner of the cure was this: he put a ring that had a root of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils; and when the man fell down immediately he adjured him to return to him no more, making still mention of Solomon and reciting the incantations which he composed. And when Eleazar would persuade and demonstrate to the spectators that he had such a power, he

set a little way off a cup or basin full of water, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it and thereby to let the spectators know that he had left the man; and when this was done the skill and the wisdom of Solomon was shown very manifestly" (*Ant. VIII*, 2, 5).

Jewish exorcists seem to have formed a normal feature of Jewish society in Our Lord's age. "If I drive out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your children drive them out?" "Therefore they shall be your judges," said Our Blessed Lord.

We learn from Acts xix, 13–16, that in Ephesus "some of the Jewish exorcists who went about attempted to invoke over them who had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying: "I conjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth." And there were certain men, seven sons of Sceva, a Jew, a chief priest, that did this. But the wicked spirit, answering said to them: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?" And the man in whom the wicked spirit was, leaping upon them, and mastering them both, prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this became known to all the Jews and Gentiles that dwelt at Ephesus, and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many who had practised magic, having brought their books together, burnt them before all." The value of the books then destroyed amounted in our money to two thousand pounds. The sum is indeed enormous, but then "Ephesian letters," Ἐφέσια γράμματα was in antiquity a standing phrase for magical recipes. Much of the writing burnt was no doubt pagan, scraps of parchment on which the letters, written on the crown, the girdle and the feet of the statue of the Great Diana of Ephesus were copied, and similar things, but much must have been Jewish stuff. Solomonic exorcisms were notorious for centuries. Over two hundred years later Origen tells us that some Christians objected to exorcising devils "because it was Jewish." They objected that as a matter of fact some Christians in exorcising demons used Solomonic writings and unauthorised formulas taken

from the Hebrew. That quaint semi-Jewish formulas were used at least in uneducated circles is shown by an early Coptic papyrus, which runs: "A good method for driving out demons. An invocation to be said over his head. Set before him olive branches, but standing behind him, say: 'Hail, God of Abraham; hail, God of Isaac; hail, God of Jacob, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, Son of the Father over the Seven and in the Seven. Make, O Iao Sabaoth, that Thy power prevail over him until Thou hast driven out this impure demon Satan, which is upon this man!'"

The Jewish practice which struck the Roman world most forcibly was undoubtedly their Sabbath rest. The scrupulous observance of this day, not merely by abstinence from all work whatever, but by domestic and peaceful rejoicing as well as worship in the synagogue, exercised an almost irresistible attraction on vast multitudes. How widely Sabbatarianism prevailed in the Roman empire can be concluded from this fact. The whole of Europe, with the exception of Portugal and the Slav countries, adopted the same nomenclature for the days of the week; they are called after the seven planets: Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn. The Germanic nations rendered these as far as possible by the names of their Teutonic deities: Sun, Moon, Tiu, Wodan, Thor, Freia and Satyr. The Germans omitted Wodan, and called Wednesday Middle-week as the Slavs do. The ancient Britons also adopted this nomenclature, as the Welsh names for the days of the week prove. Christians succeeded in Latin countries in ousting the name Sun-day and called Dominica, or the Lord's day, hence the French and Italian and Spanish names Dimanche, Domenica, Domingo, etc., but Constantine still spoke of "the venerable day of the Sun," referring to the Sunday. Now, it is obvious that the assignation of the days of the week to pagan deities did not originate with Jews or Christians. It comes from heathen times, and from such early times when the Gauls and the Teutons first learnt civilization by contact with the Roman empire. The Slavs, who came somewhat later and came only in contact

with the Eastern or Byzantine empire, did not adopt the pagan names for the days of the week. The division of time in periods of seven days is completely unknown to the classic Greek or Roman calendars, yet by A.D. 300 it seems quite the normal thing. No doubt the Christians brought the use of the week to complete triumph, but the pagans, and especially the Roman soldiers of whom so many were Mithraists, are responsible for the pagan names of the days, and beyond all cavil the Jews first accustomed the Roman people to the division of days into seven, and caused them to speak of the Hebdomas or the Septimana. As early as the days of Horace, a generation before the birth of Christ, a friend of the poet acknowledges that he has the foible of observing the Jewish Sabbath and begs in consequence to be excused. Persius, a generation after Christ, scoffs at the superstitious man of his day. He contemptuously describes the Sabbath thus: "When the days of Herod come along, when lights carefully set in a row and surrounded by violets give out a thick smoke before the dirty window, when the tunny with its tail fills the red earthenware dish, when the white mug is full of wine, then you move your lips in silent prayer and look pale through the Sabbath of the Circumcised" (*Sat. V*, 180).

It is curious that many Romans thought that the Sabbath for the Jews was a fasting day, hence Persius mocks at the Jewish convert who looks pale on the Sabbath. Augustus, in a letter to Tiberius, writes light-heartedly: "My dear Tiberius, not even a Jew on the Sabbath day keeps his fast as rigorously as I happen to have done to-day."

So common had the observance of the seventh day become that Suetonius in his life of Tiberius tells us that Diogenes, a schoolmaster in Rhodes, was "accustomed to hold disputations on the Sabbath days," and when Tiberius wanted to come on another day he sent him his boy to postpone his visit to the seventh day. The schoolboys in Asia Minor seem regularly to have had the day off on the Sabbath. Josephus, with some pardonable exaggeration, says: "There is amongst Greeks or barbarians neither a city nor a

people which the observance of the seventh day, on which we abstain from work, has not reached and in which fasting, the lighting of candles and many of our food laws are not observed."

Seneca, in a lost work on Superstitions, of which only fragments remain, inveighs bitterly against the Sabbath observance, which makes a man lose a seventh part of his whole life. He says: "The custom of this most criminal people is received throughout all lands. Though conquered they have become the lawgivers of their conquerors." Somewhat later the poet Rutilius Humatianus wrote:

> Would that Judea had never been conquered,
> Not by Pompey's arms nor the power of Titus!
> Now the contagion has spread the pestilence further
> And the victors are overcome by the losers in battle!

One must not forget, however, that mere observance of the Sabbath or of some other Jewish custom does not necessarily prove a sound belief in Jewish monotheism, or the Jewish revelation. I suspect that Fuscus Aristius, the amiable friend of Horace, who smilingly confesses that in company with many others he has the weakness of observing the Sabbath, was perhaps not very sound on points of Jewish theology. Seneca shrewdly remarks: "The Jews know the reason for their rites, but the bulk of the people performs them without knowing why they do so."

It is an extraordinary fact that women converts were much more numerous than men. The Jewish religion as such seems to us not to offer special attractions to the female sex, except their exemption from the duty of circumcision. In Damascus the news of the Roman disaster under Cestius in A.D. 64, when the Jews slew 5,300 footmen and 380 cavalry, so roused the populace that they planned a pogrom against the Jews in that city. The pogrom was delayed and almost hindered by the distrust which the Damascenes had of their own wives, which were almost all of them addicted to the Jewish religion. Their gravest concern was how to hide the plan from them. At last they succeeded

in cooping the Jews up in the Manœuvring Square, all unarmed, and in one hour's time cut the throats of ten thousand of them, without anybody interfering in their bloody work. Martial's joke about the women of Antioch is well known: "If you wanted to see the beauties of the city, you must stand outside the Jewish synagogue on a Sabbath day." Jewish female slaves were in the highest families. Herod the Great was one of the closest friends of Agrippa, the greatest general under the Emperor Augustus. Antonia, the greatest Roman matron of her time, daughter of Antony and mother of Germanicus, had a Jew for her business man and Herod Agrippa as her greatest favourite. The second wife of Nero was, if not actually a Jewess, still most favourably disposed to them. Julius Caesar was regarded as the greatest benefactor of Jewry. In the most important houses in Rome the Jewish religion must have been well known.

The Jews have preserved the memory of a sort of proselytising embassy to Rome under Domitian by four famous rabbis: Gamaliel, Eleazar, Joshua and Akiba. In later years all kinds of legends grew round this Roman visit. Even to-day Jewish writers sometimes maintain that Domitian's cousin Flavius Clemens and his wife Domitilla became Jews. This, however, is incorrect, as they were certainly Christians, though it is of course conceivable that they passed through Jewish proselytism before becoming Christians.

We learn of the keenness and persistency of Jewish proselytism from Our Lord's words in the Gospel: "Woe to you, hypocrites, you compass land and sea to make one proselyte, and when he is made, you make him the child of hell twofold more than yourselves." This saying of Christ no doubt applies to those cases when they made their convert a Jew in the full sense of the word, inclusive of circumcision, which involved the complete obligation of all the Mosaic Law as it was understood in Pharisaic circles. One knows the fierce opposition they raised against St. Paul. "All those," said he, "who desire to keep up an outward show in

a worldly way, constrain you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ, for they who are circumcised do not keep the Law either, but that they may boast of your flesh" (Gal. vi, 12).

Although we may rest assured that the Jews did not persuade very many adult pagans to submit to the painful rite of circumcision, they undoubtedly made many pagans observe most, if not all, the other requirements of Judaism. Their success seems to have been most considerable in Asia Minor. Asia Minor was the fertile field for all sorts of religious propaganda. The bulk of the people in Asia Minor, exclusive of those on the Western seaboard, were Celts, Gauls or Galatians, as they were then called, of the very same race and speech as the Gauls west of the Rhine, in what is now France and Germany. The similarity in speech between the Gauls on the Rhine and the Gauls in Asia Minor was so great that even in the fourth century after Christ any peasant on the left bank of the Rhine could understand and could converse with any peasant of Asia Minor in his native tongue, as St. Jerome tells us. A prominent characteristic of the Celts is beyond doubt their religiousness. The Bretons, the Irish, and the Scotch Highlanders are there to testify it. The Welsh and the Cornish bring these things home to us in England. The search for God is inborn in the Celt. History suggests that the first century was not very different in this respect from the twentieth. The spread of Christianity in Asia Minor was swifter than anywhere else in the world. But Christianity there was in a measure preceded by Judaism.

Scholars have thought that the worship of Jupiter Zabazius in Asia Minor was really the worship of the Lord Sabaoth of the Jews. The title Zabazius perhaps did not have its first origin in the Old Testament term Sabaoth (i.e. Lord of Hosts), as there seems to have been a genuine native god with a name sounding like Sabaoth, still Jewish influence must have aided the spread of this Jupiter, or highest god Zabazius. The Jews, led by the expression El Elyon, or Most High God, of which the Bible says that Melchisedek

was the high-priest, apparently had a predilection for this term as designating the true God as worshipped by devout Gentiles. For centuries these worshippers of the Most High God were spread through Asia Minor and even in Greece. They certainly owed their existence, partially indeed to a universal tendency to monotheism, but partially also to Jewish suggestion, support and propaganda. As throughout the whole vast Roman empire the Jewish religion was officially a *religio licita*, it could make an unhindered advance.

Outside the Roman empire the steady infiltration of Judaism is beyond doubt. North of the Black Sea apparently there was a conversion *en masse*, whole districts being Jewish in religion though not Jewish in race. The bulk of Jewry to-day lives in Poland, the Ukraine, and Roumania. It has been suggested with great plausibility that many of these are not blood descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but the progeny of the mass conversions in the early centuries. That Jews were not averse to the incorporation of originally alien multitudes into the commonwealth of Israel is shown by the somewhat forcible conversion of the Idumaeans in the south of Palestine.

When Mohammedanism arose in Arabia in the sixth century it found Judaism strongly ensconced in the Hejaz. Mohammed himself at first hoped to incorporate the Jewish community, as worshippers of the One God into his scheme. He failed, indeed, but his use of Old Testament stories and Jewish Haggadic lore in the Koran showed his contact with Jewish thought. No doubt Mohammedanism with its fierce fanaticism set a sharp limit to the spread of Judaism in the East. In the West, at least within the Roman empire, it ceased to be a great expansive force, when the Apostles of the Nazarene preached in every place that the Old Covenant had passed away and the New and Eternal Covenant had come. The bitter and fanatical opposition of Jewry to early Christianity is only explicable by the unavowed, but semi-conscious realization that a greater and a wider Power than Jewry had entered the world—the Catholic Church of Christ.

VIII

TARSUS, THE CITY OF ST. PAUL

A MOST magnificent galley from Egypt sailed up the River Cydnus and arrived at Tarsus. The stern was covered with gold, the sails were of purple and the oars were silver. These, in their motion, kept time to the music of flutes and pipes and harps. Queen Cleopatra, in the dress and character of Venus, lay under a canopy embroidered with gold of the most exquisite workmanship, while boys, like painted cupids, stood fanning her on each side of the sofa. Her maids were of the most distinguished beauty, and, habited like the Nereids and the Graces, assisted in the steerage and conduct of the vessel. The fragrance of burning incense was diffused along the shores, which were covered with multitudes of people. Some followed the procession, and such numbers went down from the city to see it, that Antony, the Triumvir, who with Octavianus and Lepidus was ruler of the Roman world, was left well-nigh alone in the tribune where he intended to receive her. In the evening the Egyptian fleet was illuminated, and made such a gorgeous display of lights that the people of Tarsus thought it the finest sight ever seen in the world. Tarsus, for a time the residence of Antony and Cleopatra, seemed the hub of the Universe.

Though Saul of Tarsus was not yet born, his parents or relatives may well have stood amongst the crowds that watched with amazement this almost fabulous show of wealth and beauty, or listened to the story of the extravagance in banqueting and feasting, which celebrated the union of Egypt with Rome in the persons of Antony and Cleopatra.

Saul of Tarsus, as a boy, may well have known citizens, if not his own relatives, who in their younger days were

guests at the sumptuous suppers, the profusion and expense of which staggered the imagination of the Greek and Roman world. Saul's parents were strict Jews, who sent their son to Jerusalem to graduate in Jewish lore; perhaps they or their parents faced all this pagan display with stern disapproval.

However, Jews had then, as now, a way of feeling themselves at home at the courts of kings. Jews were strong at Tarsus, for Tarsus was one of the great cities of the world where Jews, then as now, plied their trade. The Seleucids of Syria as well as the Ptolemies of Egypt loved to plant great colonies of Jews in the big cities they favoured, and these kings found in these great settlements the steadiest and most devoted supporters of their policy.

Antiochus Epiphanes was so enamoured of the city that circa 170 B.C. he changed its ancient name of Tarsus to "Antioch-on-the-Cydnus," a sort of replica of Antioch-on-the-Orontes, the capital of his empire. But the whim of a king, though stamped on its coinage for a time, could not change for long the name of one of the oldest cities of the world.

Already, in 831 B.C., the city was able to pay a huge tribute in silver and gold to Salmanassar II, the King of Assyria. The Assyrian monarchs periodically invaded Cilicia, a proof of its importance and opulence. Sandasarme, King of Cilicia, i.e. Upper Cilicia—for Nether-Cilicia seems to have had the name Que in those days—was the first to become a vassal of Assyria, and sent his daughter to the harem at Ninive. If we can trust some texts of the Book of Judith, Holofernes, the Cappadocian general of Assurbanipal, the Assyrian conqueror, took Tarsus and its dependencies, which, apparently, had revolted after the submission of Sandasarme.

Who were these Tarsians, and of what race were they? This is a difficult question to answer. The Tarsians themselves, in the first century, boasted that they were Greeks, Argives, in fact, and their tradition, no doubt, contained an element of truth. The extreme south-east corner of Asia

Minor was, together with the island of Cyprus, one of the earliest Grecian colonies, though the south coast elsewhere was not visited by early immigrants of Hellenic stock. In later days, certainly, after the conquest of Alexander, i.e. in the third century before Christ, this district was thoroughly hellenized in speech, and largely also in manners. In earlier days there were just a few trading stations on the coast, and no doubt a Greek quarter in Tarsus, which was only ten miles from the sea. Through its navigable river, which formed a lake close to the city, and thus provided a harbour, it was practically a seaport town. Tarsus has had at least three thousand years existence, for it is still on its ancient site, though but a mere phantom of its former glory. During thirty centuries Tarsus saw many political vicissitudes. Its earliest inhabitants, say, 1000 B.C. or before, were probably Hittites, that mysterious race, the veil over whose history is being lifted by the numerous finds of late in Bogaz Kevi, Ivriz, and many other places. It is not unlikely that they were of Aryan, not of Semitic stock; at least their language, as far as it can be deciphered, contains many Aryan elements. After the Hittites came the Arameans, the inhabitants of North Syria, closely adjoining Asia Minor. Aramean inscriptions of the eighth century before Christ have been found not far from the boundary of Cilicia. Assyrians invaded it, but their inroads were only raids of freebooters, and left no permanent impress.

The earliest coins of Tarsus we possess all bear Aramaic inscriptions, almost all to Baal of Tarsus; they are of the Persian period, that is, some four to three hundred years before Christ. Although this Baal of Tarsus bears the well-known Semitic name of Baal, he is not likely to be one of the usual Canaanitic, Aramaic or Phoenician Baals, but some earlier, indigenous deity that assumed the new name of Baal, with the language of the Arameans. Probably, Sandan on his pyre, or some Hittite male chief of the pantheon, is meant by the figure which appears on the coins from the earliest days till those of the Roman Empire. After Alexander's conquest, Syrian and Egyptian monarchs,

the Seleucids and Ptolemies disputed the possession of the rich valleys of Cilicia. In the century before Christ the power of the nominal suzerain, the King of Syria, had so weakened, that Cilicia became independent, and Cilician pirates became for a time the terror of the Mediterranean world.

Pompey, the Roman general, conquered Cilicia for the Empire in 64 B.C., and ever since Tarsus basked in the sunshine of Imperial favour. It was definitely in favour of monarchy as against republicanism during the long-drawn-out struggle between the old regime and that of Imperial Rome. For a short time, indeed, the Roman general Cassius wreaked his vengeance upon it in the very last years of the Republic, but soon Antony restored what Cassius had destroyed, and for some years the eyes of all the world were upon the home of Antony and Cleopatra.

Tarsus became a great metropolis, one of the great commercial centres of the Old World. Rome had destroyed both Carthage and Corinth in one year because they were political and commercial rivals, but Rome had outgrown the fear of any possible rivals, and found her keenest supporters in the great cities, last but not least in mighty and ancient Tarsus.

It was a cosmopolitan city, but the Oriental atmosphere never passed away. However much Tarsians might boast that they were Greeks, it was evident that the Eastern strain was predominant.

We have two addresses of Dio Chrysostom, who was a young lad when St. Paul died, and who became an intimate friend of the Emperor Trajan. In these two addresses he speaks to the people of Tarsus in that free and easy and yet elegant style which merited for him the title "Golden-mouthed." In these discourses he twits the Tarsians with many things, he speaks in a half-humorous strain, though one suspects that Dio was not very partial to the Tarsians. He tells them of the Orientalism of their city; "what a difference after coming from purely Greek Rhodes"! He spends part of his speech in ridiculing their funny accent and utterance. It seems to have been, according to him,

a sort of sing-song, sneezing, snorting, and hiccoughing accent! Dio, who was not precisely a saint, says that he is shocked at the looseness of their manners. Their women, indeed, were dressed with exaggerated modesty, their whole form was clad in some large cloak, that even the face could scarcely be seen, and they themselves could only see straight ahead, as if they had blinkers on. Though their dress seems to have been a combination of that of a Turkish lady and a Catholic nun, they were none too strict in their behaviour. In fact, the lasciviousness of the men and women is castigated in all too plain words.

The municipal pride and local patriotism of the Tarsians seem to have been notorious. Dio good-naturedly damns the beauties and advantages of their city with faint praise. The water of the Cydnus, though pure while it was that of a mountain stream rushing down the slopes of the Taurus, is somewhat muddy when it reaches Tarsus. The climate and the marshy soil? Well, says Dio, it is all right, but not nature's very best. The city had, of course, its gymnasia, its baths, its theatres, as every great town in those days, but it had no acropolis, which most cities had; no hill or rock or rising ground crowned with the principal buildings; it lacked the picturesque surroundings of Antioch.

The Taurus range could be seen on the sky-line, but was too far away to add to the beauty of the town. The town, however, had a "Golden Stoa," a golden colonnade, under which its citizens could saunter and gossip, which was one of the wonders of the world. It was only comparable to the Stoa at Rome, Alexandria, Athens, or Antioch. The River Cydnus ran straight through the town, almost dividing it in halves, and within the town made a sharp bend; this at least must have lent enchantment to the scene. The angle at which the Cydnus turned was so sharp, that the river in flood often continued straight on, disregarding its bed, and inundating the field on which the gymnasium stood. Finally, but this was long after St. Paul knew the city, it dug a new bed for itself, relinquishing the old one.

The Roman authorities, to prevent the floods at the river bend, had made a canal to carry off the superfluous waters before they entered the city. This canal gradually became the main river, and left only a rivulet to flow through the town.

Antony had made Tarsus a free city, a sort of hansa town of antiquity, and citizenship of Tarsus was no mean dignity. Roman citizenship was a different and a greater thing. Only a small number of Tarsians were Roman citizens. Pompey, who favoured the Jews, had probably given a certain number of these Roman distinctions to Jewish citizens, remarkable for their devotion to the Roman cause, or, I very much suspect, for financial assistance to the monarchical as against the republican cause. Thus, St. Paul was citizen of Tarsus, and also citizen of Rome. Someone has remarked, I believe Sir W. Ramsay, that though St. Paul, when required, appealed to his Roman citizenship, he naturally described himself, when rescued from the infuriated mob at Jerusalem, as a Jew, a citizen of Tarsus, "no mean city." In that moment of supreme danger, after the terrifying experience of being almost done to death by the maddened fanaticism of the crowd, his citizenship of Tarsus was the first thing that came into St. Paul's mind in his own defence, rather than his claim on Rome.

The intensity of Tarsian pride appears clearly in the second speech of Dio to the citizens. They seem to be perpetually at loggerheads with the Roman Procurator, and repeatedly denouncing him to the Roman Government, just as the Jews and the Samaritans denounced Pontius Pilate, and brought about his fall. Cilicia, though technically incorporated in Syria, and placed under the Legate of that Province, when St. Paul was a child, had a separate administrator, as Judea had. Tarsians were in frequent litigation with the smaller townships, whose boundaries joined theirs. Dio begs them to be reasonable. Tarsus is a great city; it can afford to be generous to smaller boroughs. Why should the Record Office for the whole Province be at Tarsus, and thus oblige the burgesses of distant boroughs to make expensive journeys

to the capital, whenever they want to consult their deeds, conveyances and official documents? It was an act of sheer tyranny and municipal pride, which benefited no one. To rouse universal hatred was dangerous even for Tarsus, however mighty it thought itself. Moreover, there were difficulties and disturbances within the city. It was ruled by an aristocracy, or rather, a plutocracy. Men might be born and bred in Tarsus, and yet not be on the official citizen roll, and be without a vote for the Council, because the rates and taxes they paid fell below a definite amount. That was unusual in Asian towns. Tarsians were ruled by a clique of commercial magnates.

Did St. Paul, by claiming Tarsian citizenship, mean to imply that though he looked a beggar, with his garments tattered and torn by the wild rabble, he was a man of means and consequence? How tantalizing that the Acts, though they tell us of St. Paul's sister and her little boy, tell us nothing of his parents.

The disfranchised poor gave serious trouble in Tarsus, and Dio advises a change in the municipal constitution, in order to give some share to all citizens in the management of the city.

It is not unlikely that the scandalous money-grabbing of the Roman Procurator, Cossutianus Capito, had rendered the maladministration of Cilicia, and therefore of Tarsus, its capital, unbearable. This man was expelled from the Roman Senate in the reign of Nero, in the early golden days of that emperor, A.D. 57, for financial oppression and barefaced robbery in Cilicia. But four years later he, as son-in-law of Tigellinus, Nero's favourite, received public pardon, and was reinstated. Over twenty years later Juvenal in his *Satires* (viii, 95) still refers to him as "that Cilician pirate," so notorious had his crimes become throughout the Roman world.

It cannot have been conducive to the tranquillity of the town that it possessed a greater number of students at the University than any other town of the Empire. The University of Tarsus was better attended than that of Athens

or Alexandria, but it was remarkable that whereas at Athens and Alexandria the majority of the students came from elsewhere and were foreigners to their university town, in Tarsus the majority of students came from the city or surrounding country. It was the local population itself which had devoted itself to education to an extraordinary degree. Cilicia was a little like Scotland, it could boast of being the best educated country in the world. Though few foreigners attend Scotch universities, yet Scotchmen are to be found in other universities, both as professors and students, so likewise in Cilicia. Few alien students came to Tarsus for their studies, but Tarsians were to be met in every great centre of the Roman commonwealth.

The students at Tarsus apparently often painted the town red with their wild pranks and frolics. Apollonius of Tyana, of whom it is difficult to say whether he was a sort of pagan friar and saint, or magician, medicine-man and conjuror—he was probably a little of each—studied for a time at Tarsus under a Phoenician professor called Euthydemus, when St. Paul was probably still a baby in arms. This sanctimonious disciple of Pythagoras, however, was soon disgusted with gay student life in the great city, and went to live at Aegae, a townlet close by, where he spent his time in the temple of the god Æsculapius with priests and philosophers. The vulgarity in amusements and vain display in dress of the Tarsians seems to have excited his contempt. Dio's estimate of Tarsian effeminacy differed but little from that of Apollonius.

A greater figure than that of Apollonius was connected with Tarsus in the first years of the first century: Athenodorus the Stoic, the tutor of the Emperor Augustus himself, and later on of his nephew Marcellus, and apparently also of Claudius. This excellent man, born at Tarsus, or rather, in a hamlet, Canana, just outside Tarsus, whence his name Cananites, died at Tarsus, full of honours, at the venerable age of 82, probably in the year 7 of our era. We know nothing of his family connexions, except that his father's name was Sandan, which makes the supposition that he was a Jew

by race very unlikely. His father's name rather suggests that he belonged to the native stock of the population. He studied as a young man in Rhodes under Posidonius; he travelled in the East, he was at some time at Petra, the rock city, and at Alexandria; he became a travelling lecturer, and settled down as a teacher in Apollonia on the coast of Epirus, somewhere, therefore, near Scutari, in Albania.

The young Octavianus, the future Emperor Augustus, came to finish his education there in the autumn of 45 B.C., and stayed there six months, and attended the lectures of Athenodorus, who exercised a lifelong influence on the first of the Roman Emperors. He followed him to Rome in March of the following year, to remain his friend and companion almost till his death. The Tarsian philosopher became his good genius, restraining his excesses, and softening his evil passions.

In his early days at Rome Athenodorus had been Cicero's adviser in literary and philosophical matters. Possibly Cicero had met him at Tarsus, for Cicero was Praetor in Cilicia in 51 B.C., and passed many times through Tarsus, which was the centre of his administration. Cicero wished to learn from him Posidonius' teaching, which would guide him in writing his treatise "De Officiis." Athenodorus now became most intimate with the Emperor. Augustus, as is well known, was a man of loose morals. Once he sent a closed litter to the house of a married lady, with the peremptory command to come and see him. Her husband and she herself were in terrible consternation, for they understood what it meant. Athenodorus happened to be in the house. He at once offered his help. He himself instead of the lady went into the litter with a sword under a wide cloak. They carried him in the closed conveyance into the presence of Augustus. Then he leaped out, brandishing his naked sword, and saying to Augustus: "Are you not afraid that one day people may come upon you this way and kill you?" The Emperor took the matter well, and the lady was saved. It was the same Athenodorus who restrained Augustus' outburst of temper by urging him to

say the alphabet through when he felt the oncoming of anger. Athenodorus seems to have been on good terms likewise with the Emperor's sister, for we know he wrote to her, probably to console her on the death of her son Marcellus.

The Tarsian philosopher was a writer of many works, which, alas! have all perished, with the exception of a few fragments, quoted mostly by Seneca. He seems to have been fond of natural sciences and of travel, but was chiefly a moralist, for philosophy in his day had already begun to be regarded as the science or art of virtuous living. As the influence of his writings must have been predominant amongst Tarsian students, when St. Paul was amongst them, it is worth while to give the longest fragment in its entirety:

> The best and noblest thing is to be occupied with public affairs, politics and civil matters. Some people spend their day basking in the sun, in bodily exercise, and looking after themselves, and for athletes it is no doubt most useful to spend their time in training sinews and physical powers. So in a way it is a magnificent thing for you, who are preparing your mind for the struggle of a public career, to be always active after your own fashion. For a man who intends to make himself useful to the citizens and all his fellow-men does train himself and makes progress by throwing himself into all sorts of business, administering private and public affairs to the best of his ability. But while in the present state of insane ambition, calumny everywhere turns right into wrong, simple straightforward behaviour is by no means safe, and there will always be more that hinders than that helps, it is therefore better to abandon public life.
>
> A great soul can find even in private life abundant opportunity for expansion. Man, whose greatest actions are performed in secret, is not like a mere animal, whose strength can be hampered by a cage. But wherever he goes into retirement, let his hidden-

ness be such that he intends to be of use to all men without distinction by his genius, by his words, by his counsel. He who secures posts for his friends, or who pleads before the courts, or who sits in Parliament, is not the only man who is useful to the commonwealth. The man who educates young people, who in this present dearth of good and virtuous instruction instils the love of goodness into men's hearts, who keeps folk back or at least for a time checks them in their rush for money or sexual pleasure, that man is doing a public work, though in private.

Who can tell who does more: the high placed official that is responsible for sentences affecting citizens and strangers, or he who declares what is righteousness, piety, patience, fortitude, contempt of death, right understanding concerning the gods, and what a help to man is a good conscience! Therefore, if you give to study the time you withdraw from public life, you are not a deserter, not a man who refuses to play his part. He is not the only soldier who is at the front, fighting right and left, but he also who guards the gate, and stands somewhere not idle, but in a less exposed place, who keeps watch or is officer at the arsenal. Those things, though bloodless, merit a soldier's pay. If you give yourself to study, you'll escape the weariness of life; you will not be longing for the night because you are sick of the day; you will not be a burden to yourself and a bore to others. You will draw round you a circle of friends and the best people will come to you, for virtue, however hidden, makes itself somehow known, and whosoever is worthy is sure to discover her whereabouts. Should we renounce all intercourse and flee from men, living entirely occupied with ourselves, then of course in our solitariness we shall lack something to do, and start to waste our time in useless building, or pulling buildings down, or trying to divert the sea or to erect weird and impossible aqueducts. Some of us use our time stingily, some wastefully, some so that we can give an account thereof, some only wish

to kill time, and that is worst. Often an old man has nothing to show for all his years but only the fact of his old age.

The reader will excuse the length of this extract, on the ground that even if St. Paul did not actually read these precise words, they give us an idea what he read and heard at Tarsus from his masters in his undergraduate days.

Seneca blamed Athenodorus for having all too readily abandoned public life, but as friend of Augustus and tutor of Claudius, Athenodorus certainly did not waste his life. When he was about sixty, he wished to retire to his native city. Augustus kept him for a year longer, saying that he could not spare him. Strange, when at Tarsus, he entered more in public life than apparently he had ever done before. Officially he was a man of letters, a thinker and writer, a professor, we would say, at the University, but in reality he became the ruler of Tarsus. He reformed the Hellenistic constitution of the city, which was exploited by a gang of self-seekers with Boetus at their head. When they would not listen to reason he had them finally expelled by Imperial authority, and made the city council an aristocratic body by restricting the right to vote to people of property. Augustus, for his sake, lessened the Imperial taxation, which pressed hard on Tarsus. The Tarsians were grateful. After Athendorus' death they regarded him as a sort of tutelary deity of the town, and kept his anniversary with religious rites.

Athenodorus the Stoic was succeeded by Nestor the Academician, or avowed follower of Plato, and the schools must have resounded with the philosophy of Plato's *Ideas*, after the stern and somewhat dismal doctrines of Zeno of Citium, the father of Stoicism. Even in universities there are vogues and fashions. Nestor died at the advanced age of ninety-two, in or about the year that our Blessed Lord was crucified, and his teaching must have filled the mind of St. Paul in his younger years. No doubt he heard him speak many times and assisted at his classes. Nestor had

been tutor of Marcellus, the nephew of Augustus, whom he destined for the Empire had not death overtaken him when he was barely over twenty. Nestor as friend of the Imperial family kept Tarsus a city favoured in high quarters.

But St. Paul was a Jew; how could he be citizen of Tarsus? How could he join in the idolatrous rites which sanctioned and expressed citizenship in a Hellenic city? We must not think of Jewish citizens as just scattered amongst their pagan fellow-citizens as individuals amongst individuals. Hellenic cities were composed of a number of clans or tribes, we would perhaps say they were divided into different wards. These "wards," not necessarily locally separate, together made up the city, and each followed its own customs and religious rites. When the Jews were citizens they were members of the Jewish "ward," not always under this name (the Jewish ward at Alexandria was called "the Macedonian"), and they acted together in corporate capacity and were left free in the choice of their own religious rites. So it must have been in Tarsus. There is evidence that the Jews were very strong at Tarsus. The Capito family was almost certainly Jewish. Boetus was a name much affected by Jews in the first century. Titus at once gave credence to the report that the Tarsians had secretly assisted the Jews in their rebellion, which ended with the capture of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. This, of course, was unthinkable of the Hellenic wards of Tarsus, but is easily explainable if one of the wards, perhaps a third or fourth of the city, was Jewish in blood. Antiochus Epiphanes, the enemy of the Maccabees, founded the Hellenic city of Tarsus in 171 B.C., and it is almost certainly he who introduced the Jewish ward in his newly-planned city, though some years later he was at war with the orthodox sections of Jewry in Palestine. There were obviously liberal Jews enough inside Palestine, and especially abroad, who would suit his colonizing plans most admirably. St. Paul's family belonged most likely to the immigrants of those days. If they were also Roman citizens, we must not forget that Cicero, Cassius, Pompey, Julius Caesar, and Mark

Antony stayed at Tarsus, and each in his turn may well have made Roman citizens of those who were most favourable to their policy. The family of the Apostle of the Gentiles was so Roman in spirit that their son bore the Latin and Roman name of Paulus, and by this Roman name was generally known in the Hellenistic world. The ingenious suggestion has been made that St. Paul's family belonged to "the freedmen of Cilicia," who had their synagogue in Jerusalem. Many Tarsians, amongst whom were a number of Jews, were sold into slavery when Tarsus was plundered by the republican party under Cassius; those who had become slaves at Rome were repatriated by Augustus and given Roman citizenship as reward for their fidelity to the Imperial cause. If so, St. Paul's parents became Roman citizens after the battle of Actium in 44 B.C. It is remarkable that according to Acts xiii, 7 Sergius Paulus, the Proconsul of Cyprus, sent for Barnabas and Saul on their arrival at Paphos. The initiative was taken by the Proconsul not by the Apostles. It is natural to suppose that Saul of Tarsus was already known to him at least by repute. The fact that Sergius had Elymas, a Jew, as philosopher and friend shows his contact with Jewish circles. Historians and inscriptions prove him connected with Cyprus and the South Eastern part of Asia Minor. St. Paul's family may well have been *protégés* of the great Roman House of Paulus. Devout Jews, however, they remained, for they sent their son to learn Jewish wisdom at the feet of Gamaliel in Jerusalem.

Whatever were the supernatural gifts bestowed by God on His "chosen vessel" to proclaim His Name unto the Gentiles, we cannot forget that much of that freedom, force and refinement of speech with which St. Paul addressed kings and governors and the learned at Athens was due to what he acquired amongst the burghers and students of Tarsus

IX

THE PAGAN SIBYL

In the days of our boyhood, when we first became acquainted with Roman history, we were somewhat mystified with the story of the old woman who came to Tarquin the Proud, Etruscan king of Rome, and offered nine books of *Sibylline Oracles* at a great price. When he mockingly refused, she cast three of them in the fire and offered the remaining six at the same price. When he again refused, she cast three further books in the fire and again offered the last three books at the same price. Then at last Tarquin the Proud felt overawed, and purchased the three at the price for which he might have bought the nine. As schoolboys we felt almost regret at the loss of the six books which must have been, so we thought, very interesting and valuable. The remaining three books were, indeed, held in great veneration by the Romans for four hundred years. They perished in the fire of the Capitol in 83 B.C., and the bulk of their contents will be for ever unknown.

There is an old Latin saying : *Omne ignotum pro magnifico*, "Whatever is unknown is thought to be wonderful." On this principle the *Sibylline Oracles* have attained a mysterious fame, which lasted for over two thousand years.

Let us try to lift the veil a little from the mysterious figure of the Sibyl and see whether ancient literature does not allow a glimpse at this heathen prophetess and her prophesying, though the bulk of her prophecies have been for ever lost.

St. Justin, or rather, Pseudo-Justin, a writer of the third century, gives us an interesting description of the haunts of the Sibyl in his *Open Letter to the Greeks*, c. 37 :

They say that she rose in Babylon, the daughter of Berossos, who wrote the history of Chaldea, and that she came, I do not know how, to the shores of the Campagna. There she gave oracles in a town called Cumae, at the sixth milestone from Baiae, where the Campanian hot springs are. In fact, when we happened to be in that town, we saw a certain place, where we inspected a large basilica hewn out of the living rock, something grand and most marvellous, where she uttered her oracles, according to the assertion of those who received this local tradition from their elders. In the middle of the basilica they showed us three seats, cut out of the same stone, in which when full of water, she performed her ablutions, they said, and having retaken her clothing, she went into the inner room of the basilica, cut out of the same rock. And in the middle she was accustomed to sit on a daïs and a throne, and thus to promulgate her oracles.

Having referred to Plato's ideas about the Sibyl, Pseudo-Justin continues :

She could not, as poets do, after having composed their poems, polish her oracles according to the laws of poetry, but uttered her oracles entirely during the period of her trance, and when the trance was gone, she forgot what she had said. That is the reason why the Sibylline Oracles are not all in verse. And we also, led by the visitors' guides, who showed us where she prophesied, saw an urn made of brass where they said they kept her relics. Amongst other things which the guides said was this also, that they had heard from their elders, that those who received the oracular answers, because they were illiterate folk, often made mistakes in the versification, and thus were the cause of some incoherent oracles which the prophetess, when out of her trance, could not remember, and also because when they wrote them down they erred against the laws of versification.

Evidently, the productions of the Sibyl were written in doggerel verses, which needed a double apology, first, that

the lady herself could not afterwards polish her poetical lines as poets do, and secondly, that illiterate people took the lines down as she spoke them, and hence made bad blunders in their reports. Neither source of error could be removed as the prophetess conveniently forgot what she had said, or was she really in a trance, after the fashion of modern mediums? Pseudo-Justin's remarks are needed to counterbalance the poetic glamour which Virgil's noble lines have cast over the prophesying of the Sibyl in the minds of those who rely on their classical studies. In Book VI of the *Æneid* we read how Æneas landed at Cumae and viewed the wonders of the place, when—

> Eager to read the rest, Achates came,
> And by his side the mad divining dame,
> The priestess of the god, Deiphobe her name.
> "Time suffers not," she said, "to feed your eyes
> With empty pleasures: haste the sacrifice."
> At her request the victims are prepared
> While to the temple she the prince invites.
> A spacious cave within its farmost part
> Was hewed and fashioned by laborious art.
> Through the hill's hollow sides, before the place
> A hundred doors a hundred entries grace;
> As many voices issue; and the sound
> Of Sibyl's words as many times rebound.
> "Now to the mouth they come," aloud she cries,
> "This is the time, enquire your destinies.
> He comes—behold the god!" Thus while she said
> (And shivering at the sacred entry staid),
> Her colour changed, her face was not the same,
> And hollow groans from her deep spirit came.
> Her hair stood up, convulsive rage possessed
> Her trembling limbs, and heaved her labouring breast.
> Greater than human kind she seemed to look,
> And with an accent more than mortal spoke.
> Her staring eyes with sparkling fury roll,
> When all the god came rushing on her soul.

Swiftly she turned and foaming as she spoke,
" Why this delay," she cried, " the powers invoke :
Thy prayers alone can open this abode."

Æneas prays to Apollo and asks him for a spoken, not a written oracle. But the Sibyl

Struggling in vain, impatient of her load,
And labouring underneath the ponderous god,
The more she strove to shake him from her breast.
With more and far superior force he pressed,
Commands his entrance and without control,
Usurps her organs and inspires her soul.
Now, with a furious blast, the hundred doors
Ope of themselves, a rushing whirlwind roars
Within the cave, and Sibyl's voice restores.

She now utters her oracle about Æneas and his descendants, and then Virgil continues :

Thus from the dark recess the Sibyl spoke,
And the resisting air the thunder broke,
The cave rebellowed and the temple shook.
The ambiguous god, who ruled her labouring breast
In these mysterious words his mind expressed,
Some truths revealed, in terms involved the rest.
At length her fury fell ; her foaming ceased
And ebbing in her soul, the god decreased."

(*Dryden*)

Thus did the greatest of the Roman poets describe the Sibyl and her grotto and her oracles twenty-three years before Christ was born. It is a grandiose and imaginative description indeed, but as Virgil knew the Cumaean caves well—he studied for some years in Naples close by—and Sibylline oracles were still in full swing in his days, his description is of great value in studying the pagan prophetess and her ways. Any traveller to-day can see the rocky shore riddled with subterranean passages, not far from Naples. These are pointed out as the home of the Sibyl, no doubt

correctly; many of the openings are now blocked up. It is said that a large central cave exists within, but it was thought dangerous to make any further excavations. Italian authorities have quite lately decided to open these rock-caves, and the work is slowly proceeding. In St. Justin's day, about A.D. 160, the Sibyl at Cumae was only a memory. The basilica he refers to may be the great inner cave which is now inaccessible.

Pseudo-Justin says that he does not know how the Sibyl came to Cumae. We also can only guess. Cumae was the oldest Greek settlement in Southern Italy. It was founded in 1050 B.C., and must have been a colony of Cumae, the famous seaport town on the Western coast of Asia Minor, about twenty-five miles north of Smyrna. As the Cumean navy plays a great part in ancient politics, Cumean settlers can have found no difficulty in crossing the seas. Everything, in fact, points to Asia Minor as the home of the Sibyl. The most famous one was the Sibyl of Erythrae, a small seaport thirty miles due west of Smyrna, opposite the island of Chios. She was, however, not the oldest. The first collection of Sibylline Oracles seems to have originated in the north-western corner of Asia Minor, and the first sacred roll of her inspired utterances was laid up in the temple at Gergis on Mount Ida, some thirty miles south of ancient Troy, of whose fall Homer sang in his *Iliad*. It is remarkable, however, that neither Homer nor Hesiod mention the Sibyl by name. But primitive legend connected the fall of Troy with the forebodings of a sibyl, for Cassandra, the daughter of Priam, king of Troy, was a veritable prophetess of woe after the fashion of a sibyl, foretelling the fall of the city, and the death of Agamemnon. She was destined to have her prophecies rejected, because, so the legend says, though she received the gift of prophecy from Apollo, she refused to yield to his amorous desires. Solon, the wisest of Athenian statesmen about 600 B.C., is said to have ordered the gathering of scattered Sibylline oracles of the Sibyl of the Hellespont, the Asiatic coast opposite Gallipoli, and placed them on Mount Ida. This

collection seems to have found its way to Erythrae, and from Erythrae to Cumae, near Naples. The Cumaean Sibyl was supposed to be identical with the Erythraean one, and the Sibyl of Erythrae is said to have offered her books to Tarquin the Proud.

In the Roman world the Sibyllines were raised to the dignity of an all-revered treasure of the Commonwealth, and they were used as one of the main instruments of statecraft. Tarquin placed them in the care of two patricians. The curators, the *Decemviri in Sacris faciundis*, were appointed to look after them in 367 B.C.; five patricians and five plebeians again later; about fifty years before Christ was born their number was increased to fifteen. As the Sibyllines were always in Greek, two official interpreters were appointed. The Sibyllines had to be consulted at least every three years, and, by order of the Senate, at the time of national portents or calamities. As the Sibyllines ordered atoning rites to a number of gods and goddesses on such occasions, they were probably the main means of introducing Greek deities amongst the Latin people.

The Sibyl was a prophetess of Apollo, and was described as his wife, his daughter, his bride, and was dedicated to his service. But Apollo was a god unknown to the ancient Romans, so was Hera, Persephone and Demeter. Greek religion entered the Roman State mainly through the Sibyl. Religious solemnities amongst the Romans were distinguished by their rite: *ritus patruus*, the ancestral rite, and *ritus graecus*, the Greek rite. The foreign character of Sibylline ceremonies was never quite forgotten.

Whereas in Italy the Sibyllines were treated with official solemnities, they never obtained such predominating official influence abroad. The flippant Greeks often treated them in a very easy-going way.

In 424 B.C. Aristophanes entertained his Athenian audience with a piece of rollicking fun, under the title of *The Knights*. In this he makes Demosthenes, a reckless and amusing slave, who has just received a cudgelling for his impertinence, try to persuade the Sausage-seller, a typical costermonger,

who can hardly read or write, that he is destined to succeed the tanner Cleon, a crafty foreigner who has gained the ascendancy over his master, drivelling old Demos, or to put it in English, over John Bull, in his dotage. The Sausage-seller is by way of being pious. The best means to persuade him is to work on his superstition.

Demosthenes. Embrace then and hold fast the promises
Which the Oracles of the gods announce to you!
Sausage-seller. But what does the Oracle say?
Demosthenes. Why, thus it says,
In figurative language, but withal
Most singularly intelligible and distinct,
Neatly expressed i' faith, concisely, tersely.
"Moreover, when the Eagle in his pride,
With crooked talons and a leathern hide
Shall seize the black and blood-devouring snake,
Then shall the woeful tanpits quail and quake;
And mighty Jove shall give command and place
To mortals of the sausage-selling race;
Unless they choose, continuing as before,
To sell their sausages for evermore."
Sausage-seller. But how does this concern me?
Explain it, will you?
Demosthenes. The leathern eagle is the Paphlagonian.
Sausage-seller. What are his talons?
Demosthenes. That explains itself.
Talons for peculation and rapacity.
Sausage-seller. But what's the snake?
Demosthenes. The snake is clear and obvious:
The snake is long and black, like a black pudding;
The snake is filled with blood, like a black pudding.
Our Oracle foretells, then, that the snake
Shall baffle and overpower the leathern eagle.

The description of a string of black sausages as a mystical snake, destined to kill the dealer in skins, Cleon the tanner, the "Leathern Eagle," is worthy of Aristophanes. But

this Aristophanic buffoonery does not badly hit off the turgid pomposity of the Oracles.

Later on in the Comedy there is a ludicrous scene in which Cleon, the Tanner, in his turn takes refuge in Oracles to persuade Old Demos not to dismiss him. The Sausage-seller is, however, not to be outdone in the supply of Oracles for Old Demos.

Both appear before their doting master with bundles of papers.

Cleon. Well, there is a bundle you see! I've brought 'em.
But that is not all; there's more of 'em to come!
Sausage-seller. I grunt and sweat, you see, with the load of 'em.
But that's not all; there is more of 'em to come.
Old Demos. But what are these?—all?
Cleon. Oracles!
Demos. What? All?
Cleon. Ah, you're surprised, it seems, at the quantity
That's nothing; I've a trunk full of 'em at home.
Sausage-seller. I've a garret and an outhouse both brimful!

Cleon and the Sausage-seller then alternately quote mock oracles that imitate the jar and jingle of the real ones, in which Old Demos is warned against Cleon and the Sausage-seller respectively. Here is one of them:

> Son of Erechteus, 'ware the gap-toothed dog,
> The crafty mongrel, that purloins thy prog;
> Fawning at meals, and filching scraps away.
> The while you gape and stare the other way.
> He prowls by night and pilfers many a prize
> Amidst the sculleries and the colonies.

"And the colonies"—these last words are an Aristophanic sally against Athenian officials who defraud Old Demos by fraudulent administration in Athens' distant settlements.

This delightful foolery goes on, the Oracles get more and more ludicrous, till doddering Old Demos comes to himself:—

> Mark me !—When I seem to doze
> When my wearied eyelids close ;
> Then they think their tricks are hid :
> But beneath the drooping lid,
> Still I keep a corner left
> Tracing every secret theft.
> I shall match them by and by !
> All the rogues you think so sly,
> All the deep intriguing set
> Are but dancing in a net,
> Till I purge their stomachs clean
> With the hemlock and the bean ! (transl. *Frere*).

However much Aristophanes might scoff, the reverence for the Sibyl was ineradicable from the Graeco-Roman mind.

A quarter of a century later in the same city the all-wise philosopher Plato will speak with deep respect and awe of the Sibyl and her utterances. Plato's words in *Phaedrus* run as follows :—

> The greatest benefits come to us through FRENZY, bestowed as some divine gift. For what the prophet foretells in *Delphi* and the frantic priests in *Dodona* has been of manifold and striking benefit to the Greeks, both in private and public affairs, yet these persons, when normal, have been of little, if any, use. Were we to set forth how much the Sibyl and others, who use divine prophecy, have benefited men, by foretelling the future, we would waste time to prove something acknowledged by all. Those whom we call oracle-givers and prophets we should deem " divine " not less than men engaged in the administration of the State, as they are instigated by the deity and moved in a trance, for many and great things they say rightly and truly, though they understand nothing of what they say.

Thus, according to Justin, Plato referred to the Sibyl

speaking in a trance. The number of Sibyls is quite indefinite. Plato seems to have known only one, but the number varies to ten and even twelve: the Erythraean, the Samian, the Persian or Babylonian, the Libyan, the Cumaean the Tiburtian, the Gergethian, who is probably the oldest of all.

Strange to say, the personality of the Sibyl remains in complete obscurity. There is no record of anyone having ever seen a living Sibyl. There is a tale of someone having seen a statue of the Sibyl Albunia with a book in her hand, in a cave at Tibur. Apparently a Sibyl was buried in the cave at Cumae. A Sibyl was buried in the temple of the Sminthian Apollo on Mount Ida in the Troad. The Cumaean Sibyl came herself in person to Tarquin. But for such indications one might almost conclude that there never was such a person in the flesh. It is to be noted that a Sibyl somehow always lived in a cave, and that at the sea-shore, or, at least, near the water of a lake, except the Sibyl near Theatyra. She is decidedly a mythical personage and people can be forgiven who say that no such person ever existed. One thing is quite certain, that Sibylline Oracles were emphatically oracles in writing, and, at least, in historical times, not by mouth. When Æneas, according to Virgil, asks that the Oracle may be given by the spoken word, not by the customary palm leaves on which they were written, and which the wind would scatter, he is apparently aware that he is asking for a rare and unusual thing.

The Sibyl was prophesying "in a frenzy," no doubt, but that was hundreds of years ago. In the Homeric age, in fact. The text of her sayings was to be kept intact for many generations. Somehow more such miraculous leaves were indeed found from time to time, but I fancy they were ascribed to some distant Sibyl of hundreds of years before. Unfortunately, the actual text of the Sibyllines has almost perished but for a line or a fragment here and there. We know they were usually written in Greek hexameters, were often marked by acrostics of the initial letters of each verse, and that they were but very rarely in prose. We

know that they revelled in ambiguities and mystifications, and their obscurity became almost proverbial. They dealt not exclusively with prophecy. In fact, their main purpose was supposed to be to indicate the ceremonies, sacrifices and supplications to be used in great national emergencies. However, in these ceremonial disquisitions they managed to weave predictions of the future, which gave them their political value.

By chance, a genuine Sibylline Oracle of about 200 B.C. has survived in the collection of imbecilities and superstitions of Phlegon, of A.D. 130, and has been recognized as such by the acumen of Hermann Diels in 1890. As it is the only remnant of Pagan Sibylline literature of any length, the reader will bear with my translation, however imperfect, and however tedious some of its details.

How many dread marvels, how many sufferings of divine destiny does not my loom avert, if thou ponderest this in thy mind, trusting in its strength!

And now I say that at some time a woman shall bear a man-woman, having indeed the marks of a man, yet also what marks baby girls. Therefore, I will not hide but proclaim sacrifices earnestly unto Demeter and chaste Persephone, herself also lady of the loom. Then also prayers to august Demeter and chaste Persephone. But first collect a sum of money, as much as thou wilt, from the crowded cities and from yourselves. Command a sacrifice to be put before Demeter, Kore's mother. Moreover, I command thee that at the public expense thrice nine maidens offer well-horned white cows, which in thy estimate are most beautiful and costly. Girls, as I said before, I command to do this in the Greek way, beseeching the immortal Queen by their sacrifices reverently and chastely. Then also afterwards from thy matrons thou shalt take the continual libations, and trusting in my loom, they shall carry the shining torch to the august Demeter. On the second occurrence, the old women who wisely bring the sacrifice, should pour thrice as much of wineless libations in the mighty fire, and the young ones should

eagerly give to Pluto's wife what they have in their youthful mind. The girls should pray the august, all-learned wife of Pluto that she remain in the mother-city, while the war rages, and that the forgetfulness amongst the Greeks may cease both of the city and of her. Boys and girls should carry thence a sum of money, etc. . . .

SECOND ORACLE

. . . . by divinely established loom. And the august wife of Pluto should be adorned with many coloured garments that there be a stay of the evil, a gift, namely, the most beautiful and desirable on earth it is given to mortals to know and to bring eagerly, woven by the loom, to the Maiden Queen. Moreover, unto Demeter and chaste Persephone, that they may always keep away the yoke from your country. Unto Hades-Pluto the blood of a black ox people (should bring) in bright garments clad, after the Shepherd, who as slaughterer of the ox himself full of courage shall be there as a believer and the others also, who are believers in their fatherland, No unbelieving man should be present at the sacrifices, but be outside the place where it is lawful that this should be done in the light, so that the unbeliever have a sacrifice without banquet. In accordance with this, whosoever, skilful in our oracles, comes hither, let him approach Phoebus the august prince with sacrifices, eagerly burning on altars the fat-covered thighbones at last of all-white goats. Verily ye all know, let the suppliant entreat Phoebus Paeon with covered head that there be a remission of the evil, returning thence to the noble Queen Hera, sacrificing a sleek ox in ancestral fashion according to destiny. And hymns by those who are most noble in birth amongst the people . . . [*Two lines missing.*]

And of islands the inhabitants, when they eagerly tread again the Cumaean soil of their rivals, they should set up a wooden image and a house of august Queen Hera in ancestral fashion. When, however, according to my oracles,

all this shall have come to pass, thou shalt come with a jar, approaching the most august Queen in sacrifices, performing wineless libations, as many as there are days in the year. After a long time this shall happen again at last, but not in your lifetime, and he who performs this, strength shall be his always. Do this, sacrificing to the gods wineless libations and lambs. When thou hast already everywhere great houses of Hera, and when what was once of wood shall be of polished stone, and all the other things which I have gathered, know thou well by my oracular palm leaves the release from the evil. As omen I cover my gleaming eyes with the veil and touch the shining leaves of the fruitful Olive (wreath on my head). When a time comes to you, utterly hopeless, in which once other monstrosities occur, a Trojan shall then release thee from evil and from the land of Hellas.

Dost thou urge me to proclaim further on other themes ?

No one who has read his Livy can fail to know that amongst the Romans in a national crisis the most fearful omens and prodigies were supposed to happen. Shrewd politicians used popular superstition to the uttermost for their own ends. Now, the acute forger of the above Sibylline Oracle has left enough traces of his fraudulent work to guess the occasion, the precise meaning and even the author of the forgery. The tedious list of ceremonies, sacrifices, libations, torchlight processions, litanies by boy and girl choristers are not in reality the purpose of this oracular production. Of course, the populace was frightened in their national distress by fearful signs and tokens. The birth of monstrosities was vulgarly regarded as the most frightful of all. Livy tells us (xxx, Q. 12, 6) that about this time a woman had borne a man-woman ; that they had found a being that was half man, half woman, of about sixteen years old. This was a sign of the wrath of the gods. They must be propitiated. Foreign gods must be pacified. Native gods had failed. Demeter, Persephone, Apollo, Kore, were all foreign deities that came to Rome from the Greek world,

and especially from the Troas, the district opposite Gallipoli, on the Asiatic shore.

The Sibyl was in charge of Asiatic Ritual. The fifteen men must search her books to know how to meet a case of man-woman monstrosities by atoning rites. They found a lucky passage, for with the list of ceremonies it contained a double prophecy ; one in the acrostic and one at the end of the Oracle.

This Oracle, then, purported to be almost a thousand years old, for the clever forger had made the Sibyl prophecy long before the Trojan ancestors of the Romans had landed on the islands and the shore near Naples, in fact, when their arrival at Cumæ was supposed to be still in the future. In those far-off days they had *wooden* statues and temples to the gods, and the conquest of Italy was still in the dim future. The fulfilment of this pretended prophecy of this conquest constituted a fine proof for any superstitious soul that the latter part of the prophecy would also become true. Now, here are the heartening words :—

> When a time comes to you, utterly hopeless, in which other such monstrosities (about men-women) occur, a Trojan shall then release thee from evil and from the land of Hellas.

The meaning is self-evident ! A Trojan ! who is he ? Of course Attalos of Pergamum ; a king, part of whose kingdom consisted of the Troad, whose capital was less than fifty miles from the sacred city of the Iliad, a friend of the Romans, who believed, or said he believed, in the Trojan origin of the Roman race. The Romans in those days were full of the thought of their supposed original home. With great to-do, they had brought the Black Stone of Pessinus, the Palladium of their reputed ancestors from Asia, in the year 205 B.C. and set it up at Rome ! The king of Pergamum is coming to the aid of the Romans in their war with Philip. The Consul, Sulpicius, with the army, had left Italy for Greece in 200 B.C., but the war was unpopular after the long agony of the Second Punic war, and it was

difficult to persuade the Roman populace to engage in another. In fact the war was vetoed, but Sulpicius convinced them that if they did not attack Philip, Philip would soon attack them. Happily, King Attalos of Pergamum was on the side of Rome, and his fleet was of great assistance to them. Unfortunately, the Greeks were lukewarm in the cause of Rome, many Greeks sided with Philip, many waited to see which side would win, hence, the pious aspiration in the Oracle that the Greek neglect of Rome and of the goddess might cease. The Oracle was cunningly manufactured to counteract the dread of the bad omens, which the anti-war party, no doubt, exploited, and it deftly inserted a promise of success through the aid of the "Trojan" Attalos. It is idle to expect poetic inspiration in these doggerel Sham-Homeric hexameters, which had, moreover, to satisfy the needs of an acrostic ; for out of the first letters of each line a consecutive Greek sentence is composed which runs : "Prancing on a steed he will turn the evil again to something new."

Cicero in later years mocked at the idea that the Sibyl was supposed to utter her version in a frenzy, as if, said he, such artificial productions could be produced by anybody in ecstasy!

The above-quoted Oracle escaped destruction probably by chance. The official collection was most zealously guarded, and the laity never saw it, hence, when Stilicho, in A.D. 400, burnt the Sibylline books, no recollection of their contents remained. Sometimes, however, to create a deeper impression of their solemnity and trustworthiness, even the Greek text was read in the Senate. No doubt the above quoted Oracle owed its escape from destruction by being taken down on some such occasion.

Oracles came very handy in political intrigues. In the year 187 B.C., when they wanted to deprive the Proconsul, Cnejus Manlius, of the honour of a triumph, they found a Sibylline Oracle forbidding the crossing of the mountain range of the Taurus, which crossing had been the avowed intention of the Proconsul.

Previous to the murder of Cæsar the rumour was spread that a Sibylline Oracle was to be shown to the Senate, authorizing the offer to Cæsar of the kingly crown. In 56 B.C. an Oracle was produced that the Romans could indeed restore the king of Egypt, Ptolemy Auletes, but not by an armed force, without danger to Rome, Cicero denounced the Oracle as a fraud. Trusting in a Sibylline Oracle that three people of the Cornelian House should be rulers of Rome, Cornelius Lentulus, that aristocratic rake, who went by the name of Sura or "Calf of a leg," imagined he was destined to be master of Rome, and murdered and intrigued till he was assassinated on December 5, 63 B.C. The collection of Sibylline Oracles in the care of the public authorities was an ever growing one. The *libri fatales* of the people of Vei, Rome's ancient rival, but few miles distant from the city, seem to have found their way into the collection. The Etruscan Oracles of the prophetess Begoe, and the sayings of Albunea of Tibur certainly found their way thither. In the year 213 B.C., during the bitter struggle with Hannibal, the Carmina Marciana, the origin of which cannot be traced, but which were certainly not aboriginally Roman, were added to the list. It is, indeed, remarkable that the Oracle-trade was almost completely built up on foreign, not Roman, material. Besides the official collections a number of Sibylline prophecies circulated in private circles; the public authorities had a right to requisition and control these. When the emperor Augustus became *Pontifex Maximus*, in the year 12 B.C., he had a search made for all oracles in private possession in the city. He ordered no less than 2,000 to be burnt. He even sifted those that claimed to be Sibylline. He commanded, the *xv viri*, the Fifteen Curators, to copy those recognized as genuine, with their own hands, and deposited them in the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine hill.

When Christ was a young man, in the year A.D. 19, a new Sibylline Oracle roused attention in Rome, in consequence a new requisition of all oracles was again made

by imperial authority. Some were declared not genuine, others were accepted in the official collection.

Two years after our Lord's death the Fifteen-man, Caninius, again pointed out a new book of Sibylline Oracles. But the best days of the Pagan Sibyl were over. No doubt the burning of the old collection, and the subsequent search for authentic oracles in private collections, had given the heathen Sibyl a new lease of life. Seven years after the destruction of the Jupiter temple on the Capitol in 83 B.C., and the burning of the old Sibylline collection, the Senate sent a commission to Asia to collect genuine Sibyllines at Erythrae, from whence the Commissioners collected about a thousand lines, and also at Ilium, in Samos, in Sicily and even Italy and Roman Africa. Thus, for a time, Sibyllines were in heavy demand, but with the decay of the Pagan religion came the gradual decay of the Sibyllines.

An interesting light is thrown on the use of the Sibyllines for State purposes as late as the reign of the Emperor Aurelian (A.D. 270–275). This mighty soldier, who saved the empire from complete disaster, wrote on one of his campaigns, when far away from the capital, as follows, to the members of the Senate:

> I am amazed, Sacred Fathers, that you have doubted so long about inspecting the Sibylline books, as if you had to deal with a Christian Church instead of with a temple of all the gods. Proceed, therefore, to action and help your Prince, labouring in the needs of the Commonwealth, by the continence of the priests and solemn ceremonies. Let the books be consulted, whatever has to be performed, let it be religiously carried out. Whatever costs, captives of whatever race, whatever animal-victims—I do not refuse them, but offer them willingly, for it is no shame to obtain the victory by the aid of the gods. Amongst our ancestors many a war was thus brought to a close, and thus began. I have given orders by letters to the Prefect of the Exchequer to defray any expenses. Besides, the Public Treasury is under your own control. It contains more money than I care for, so I hear.

Striking is the contemptuous reference to the Christian Church. Gallienus, the immediate predecessor of Aurelian, had stopped the Decian-Valerian persecution, restored the confiscated buildings and properties to the Christians and even in some indirect way made their legal existence as a corporation possible. Christian premises were safe against the intrusion of pagans. Aurelian accepted this Edict of Tolerance of his predecessor for a few years, but afterwards renewed the persecution. This accounts for the sneering remark: "Consult your own sacred books, you need not be afraid, you need not go to Christian churches for them; you have got them in your own Temple." It is also possible that this remark of the Emperor was provoked by the fact that by that time it was quite notorious amongst the pagans that the Christians themselves possessed Sibyllines. This Christian claim to have Sibyllines must have appeared preposterous impertinence to a rough warrior as Aurelian was, hence the jerky sentence: "forsooth, you needn't go to the Christians for them!"

Jews and Christians, by using the Sibyl as a prophetess of their faith, gave her a new lease of life for many centuries, for Jews and Christians wrote almost five thousand verses of Sibylline Oracles. These Jewish-Christian Sibylline books have hardly any connection whatever with the Sibyllines of the ancient Roman and Greek world. Possibly, a few verses in the Third Book of this new collection may belong to pagan days, but they are certainly not many. The study of the Jewish-Christian Sibyl is a subject by itself and quite apart from that of heathen Oracles.

X

THE JEWISH SIBYL

Well over four thousand Homeric hexameters have been handed down to us under the title of Sibylline Oracles. By far the greater part of these are of Jewish origin. In this chaotic collection, which is arbitrarily divided in twelve books, there are, indeed, a few hundreds of lines which are unmistakable genuine pagan Sibyllines; there are many hundreds of lines, perhaps even a thousand, which must be ascribed to Christian sources, but almost three-fourths of this weird and dismal miscellany owes its existence to Jewish zeal and ingenuity. In consequence, these thousands of verses present an absorbing problem, both to the historian and the man of letters. The more so as the Jewish author re-edited and manipulated the pagan lines he utilized, and the Christian, in his turn, did this to the Jewish collection, which he incorporated. If we add to this that both pagans, Jews and Christians had to cover their traces and envelop themselves in studied obscurity, considering that they were writing what purported to be oracular predictions, we come to realize what a tangle and a maze the present twelve books of Sibyllines offer to the student. There is one point in which these Jewish-Christian utterances differ from real pagan ones. This is not merely the avoidance of polytheism and idolatry. This of course is plain, but for an occasional "gods" instead of God, left erroneously in the text; and a rather free use of terms which savour of Greek mythology. The main difference is the absence of all ceremonies and rites of propitiation which, as we have seen in our previous essay, constitute so large a part of the pagan Sibyllines that the prophetic lines are apparently subsidiary.

The Jewish use of Sibylline Oracles for the purpose of religious propaganda cannot be fully understood, except in the light of the larger question of the Jewish employment of classical literature for the furtherance of their aims. A number of famous Greek authors were interpolated, and a great number of passages fraudulently ascribed to them in favour of monotheism and the Mosaic revelation, or at least in favour of Jewish morality and chastising pagan vices.

Phokylides was a poet who flourished some 540 years before Christ. The few fragments of his works which are extant remind us of the sententious yet good-humoured moral maxims of the English poet, Pope. Here is the most extensive fragment :—

> I can distinguish amongst woman kind
> Four different qualities and, strange, I find
> First the canine, and next the busy bee,
> A third the mare, a fourth a sow I see,
> The last I neither good nor bad will call,
> The mare is graceful, lively, free withall
> The Miss Canine will make a scolding wife
> But with the bee you lead a happy life
> Active, industrious, she the house will keep.
> Then marry her and you will never weep.
>
> (*Hewett's transl. modif.*)

This ancient sage, who had gathered a great deal of worldly wisdom in the cosmopolitan seaport, Miletus, where he lived, became renowned throughout the Greek-speaking world. An Alexandrian Jew, living some four hundred years later, that is, somewhat after Ben Sirach, the author of Ecclesiasticus, availed himself of the prestige of Phokylides' name, and compiled some 230 hexameters, which deal with precepts of moral behaviour. He compiled them rather than completely composed them. Although it has been customary to say that the whole poem is a Jewish composition, the recent studies of Professor Lincke tend to show that it probably contains much genuine Phokylidean

material. The standard of conduct advocated is very high and noble, the specifically religious element is not much emphasized. The hope of immortality, though clear, is expressed in somewhat pagan phraseology. This Jewish compilation had extraordinary good fortune. Ninety-three verses of it are embodied in the Second Book of the Sibyllines (vv. 56-148). It must have been extraordinarily popular in the Renaissance period. It was one of the earliest Greek works printed, and dozens of editions appeared in the sixteenth century. It reads like a couple of chapters of the *Book of Proverbs*, and was thus regarded as wholesome reading for youthful scholars.

The Jews sought for great names to father their propaganda-literature on, even outside the Hellenistic world.

An early Achaemenid (Ancient Persian) with the name of Hystaspes, seems to have been to Zoroaster's religion what King Asoka was to early Buddhism. He was probably a contemporary of Zoroaster himself, and a patron of the Prophet of Iran. In the Persian world this king was certainly regarded as the great apostle of the truth. The Jews composed under his name a Greek work of an oracular and apocalyptic kind. It is, unfortunately, no longer extant, it would not be surprising, however, if some matter of it were embedded in our present Sibyllines. We gather from references to it that though it used the word Zeus instead of God, it was an impressive prophecy of the destruction of the world by fire, and of the coming of the Great Anointed King, his struggle and his bravery and his final triumph. This Jewish Apocalypse was in the form of an interpretation of some grandiose dream of the Persian king. The name of Hystaspes is repeatedly coupled with that of the Sibyl in the literature of early Christians, who admired the work, and apparently, saw in the references to the Anointed, i.e. to Christ, allusions to our Blessed Lord.

When Tacitus tells us that throughout the whole Orient the expectation of the coming of a Great King had spread, this was no doubt in part due to such Jewish literature as the Sibyllines and Hystaspes.

The Jews were not satisfied with interpolating moral and prophetic writings; they succeeded in doctoring the great Greek Classics. This they attempted by utilizing the works of the philosopher-historian Hecataeus of Abdera, a contemporary of Alexander the Great, who accompanied his generals in Syria and Egypt. Whether the Jews completely wrote some treatises, and ascribed them to Hecataeus, or merely interpolated on a large scale his real works, we do not know. It is most likely that Hecataeus, during his travels, really became interested in the Jews, and wrote about them, expressing his conviction of their antiquity. The Jews did the rest, and tried to show that Greek literature was originally monotheistic, and dependent on Jewish thought. Pseudo-Hecataeus contained forgeries ascribed to Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and the then most popular favourites, Philemon and Menander. In fact, some lines in favour of the Sabbath are ascribed to Homer, Hesiod and Linus, and longer pieces are ascribed to Orpheus himself. Sophocles is made to say :—

> One in very truth, one only is God
> He who fashioned the sky and the broad earth,
> The heavy swell of the sea and the strength of the winds,
> But we mortals all, erring in mind,
> Have set up to comfort ourselves in our woes
> Statues of gods out of wood or brass,
> Fashioned of gold or wrought in ivory
> To these sacrifices and sacred days
> We dedicate and we fancy we show piety !

Æschylus is supposed to have preached :—

> Distinguish between mortals and God, let Him
> Not seem to be made of flesh, like unto thee.
> Indeed, thou knowest Him not, now resembling fire,
> A force without form, now water, now darkness,
> Becoming like, sometimes, even to monsters
> To the wind, the cloud, lightning, thunder and rain.
> Him serves the sea and the rocks
> And every spring and meeting of waters.

One of the very boldest forgeries was that of the last will and testament of Orpheus to his son Musaeus. In this Diatheke or Testament the Father of Greek mystical song tells his son that he revokes his worship of the 365 gods and the sacred orgies connected therewith, and acknowledges only one true God. A few lines of this must suffice :—

> Adore only the Lord of the world.
> He is one, self-begotten, all floweth from One,
> He Himself dwelleth within, nor has any mortal
> Ever seen Him, though He is seeing all.
> He both good and evil gives to mortals
> And fearful war and bitter disaster.
> There is none besides the Great Lord.
> Him I see not, for around a cloud is established
> Unto all mortal eyes in sacred things ;
> They are too weak to see Zeus, ruler of all things.

It would have been strange had not the Jews availed themselves also of the name of the Sibyl, that mysterious awe-inspiring prophetess, venerated throughout the Greco-Roman world. They could do so with a better conscience than in their other literary pursuits. The Sibyl was supposed to be inspired by God, perhaps she was often so in truth, thought probably many a Jew. Could not a Jew, a child of the Prophets of old, feel the same inspiration in proclaiming the unity of God, and the coming of the Messianic king ? If the spirit moved him, and in sacred enthusiasm he had written words proclaiming God's glory and the doom of sinners, had he not a right to see in his hallowed song something as holy as the most mysterious utterance of a Sibyl ?

This is said in order to suggest that Jewish Sibyllines were not always conscious forgeries, deliberate fakes, with the hope of deceiving the unsuspecting crowd. The line between sincerity and insincerity is often difficult to draw, but I think we should not look upon the Jewish Sibyllines throughout as a wretched collection of mock-prophecies.

There are passages, now and then, which sound too noble, and ring too true to be the outcome of cunning or deceit.

I have attempted to render into English hexameters a longer passage in order to show that the Sibyllines contain much which is both religiously and poetically exalted and beautiful, amidst other stuff which is inexpressibly tedious and trifling.

Thunderer, thou from on high, who art blessed in heaven,
Whose throne are the Cherubim, a moment of rest I beseech Thee,
I who have ever spoken the truth, but whose heart is now weary!
Why is my innermost being astir once again, why heaveth my bosom?
As with a scourge I am driven to utter my sayings
And to proclaim them to all, and again must I be telling
Whatever God may command, for He gives me a message to mortals.
Men, who possess in your being God's image and likeness,
Why are you straying so idly and why are you leaving the pathway
Guiding you right, not remembering your Maker immortal?
One is the Ruler of all things, the God, who dwelleth in heaven
He who exists of Himself, who, unseen, is the Seer of all things.
Him did no craftsman shape out of gold, nor did he mould Him,
Artfully cutting the ivory or beating the silver.
He has eternally shown His own Being and Selfhood
Who ever was and now is and who is to be always.
What mortal man to see God with his eyes would be able
Or even only the name of the God, who in heaven
Reigns over all in His might, who could hear it and bear it?
He is the maker of all things, He spoke and there came into being
Sunrise and sunset and moon, ever waxing and waning.

He made the sky overhead and the far stretching ocean
Also the glistening stars and the earth all embracing,
Powerful Mother of all things, and giving birth to springs and to rivers.
Fire He made and the night and the day ever-changing.
He, even God, was the Maker of four lettered Adam
Who was created first of us all and whose name is the emblem
Of Arctic North and Dark West, Arid South and Eastern Meadows.
He did establish man's form and his frame, and together
Also with him He created the beasts of the field and whatever
Creepeth and crawleth on earth and the birds of the heavens!
Why refuse worship and fear unto Him in your madness,
Why bend the knee unto cats and to slimiest serpents,
Sacrifice victims and honouring statues and idols,
Thronging the gateways of temples, where God is not living?
Him, who is verily God, keeping the earth and the heavens
Honour ye Him, ye adorers of stones and forget not the judgment
Of the immortal Saviour and Maker of all things!
Woe to you bloodthirsty race of deceivers, and wicked and godless,
Criminal, bent upon ill, and delighted with cunning,
Idol-adorers, adulterers and ever-scheming some evil!
Maddening lust in your heart ever rages within you,
One robs the other and shamelessly cheats his own comrade!
Be a man ever so rich, he thinks not of helping his neighbour.
Wickedness fearful and fierce dwells in every bosom.
All break their vows and the wedded as well as the widows
Make shameful gain by the foul sale of their bodies,
Once with the men, they forget what beseemeth a woman.
Now, in the days when Rome will bear sway over Egypt,

Joining it unto itself, then will come the great kingdom
Of the immortal king and among men it appeareth.
Then will be coming a leader most holy and bearing the sceptre
Ruling the world as the ages pass on for ever and ever.

As the origin of the Jewish Sibylline collection is wrapt in obscurity, it is difficult to speak with absolute certainty about its earliest history, but it seems to be as follows.

Ancient authors speak of a Chaldean, Persian, or Hebrew Sibyl, and give her the name of Sabbe or Sambethe, and they say that she was the daughter of Berossos, the Babylonian priest, who in the days of Alexander, made the Greek world acquainted with the remotest antiquities of Chaldea.

Now, some forty years ago, attention was drawn by E. Schürer to a funeral inscription of the time of Trajan (A.D. 98-117) which was found in Thyatira, the city of one of the seven Churches to which St. John wrote in the *Apocalypse*. The beginning of this inscription reads :—

PHABIOS ZOSIMOS BUILT AND PLACED THE GRAVE IN A SACRED SPOT WHICH IS BEFORE THE CITY CLOSE TO THE SAMBATHEION WITHIN THE PRECINCTS OF THE CHALDEAN.

It is natural to see in the Sambatheion the shrine where Sambethe, the Chaldean Sibyl, prophesied. The more so, as St. John wrote to the Church at Thyatira, not many years before this inscription was engraved :—

Thou sufferest the woman, Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess ; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time that she might repent, and she willeth not to repent of her fornication. Behold I set her on a banqueting couch, and them that commit adultery with her, to enjoy great tribulation, except they

repent of her works. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he who searches the reins and the hearts; and I will give unto each one of you according to your works. But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, which know not the deep things of Satan, as they say; I lay upon you no other burden (Apoc. ii, 20–24).

No doubt, "fornication" and "adultery" in this context must be taken primarily in the Old Testament sense, of being unfaithful to God, and philandering with the world. The Thyatiran prophetess seems to have persuaded her followers to disregard the decrees of the Council of Jerusalem:—

It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things, that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication.

Partaking of heathen sacrificial banquets led people to the immediate danger of sin, at least in Eastern temples. You cannot drink the chalice of the Lord and the chalice of devils, you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and the table of devils, rightly said St. Paul.

The Thyatiran prophetess regarded these pagan festivities as harmless, and so led her "broadminded" followers into numberless scenes of sin. St. John certainly paints a dark picture of her baneful influence.

That part of the world, the Phrygian lands, seems to have been the very home of orgiastic prophetesses. Poor Tertullian was misled by the Montanist prophetess in the second century, Firmilian wrote of a Cappadocian prophetess in the third.

Sambethe, then, the Chaldean Sibyl, in later days called the daughter of Berossos, was probably responsible for the first nucleus of "Jewish" oracles. She herself was probably not a Jewess, but one of those nondescript religionists, who had, indeed, rejected the folly of polytheism, but were only vague monotheists. There is certainly much

in the Oracles, especially in Book III, which must have arisen rather in general Semitic, Persian-Chaldean circles, than in specific Jewish ones. We read about Kronos and the Titans, Japetus, Noah, and the Tower of Babel and the ten antediluvian patriarchs and such like Irano-Babylonian ideas. The Jewish Sibyl utilized this material, to which were already added a number of purely Hellenistic, i.e. pagan-Greek oracles, mostly very short, of half a dozen lines at most. Some of these may be of great antiquity, but most seem to date from c. 180 B.C. to c. 100 B.C. Such lines as :—

> A Lydian earthquake shall destroy the land of Persia and bring horrible woes on Europe and Asia. The murderous king of Sidon and the war cry of strange sea-farers shall fall on the people of Samos and they shall come to a fatal doom.

may possibly go back to the revolt of the Ionians against the Persians in 499 B.C.

The Jewish Sibyl praises the righteous race of the Jews, the people of Jerusalem, who abstain from idolatry, and from the foul sins of the heathen, and who are persecuted by their foes, but will be rescued by " the Great King."

At the end of the Third Book, by far the longest of the twelve, the Chaldean as well as the Jewish prophetess seems to peep through the very obscurity of the text.

> These things do I show forth, who came from the walls of the Assyrian Babylon, sent in frenzy as a fire into Hellas, foretelling to all mortals the manifold wrath of God. I, Sabbe, daughter of Berossos and of Erymanthes (Doomprophecy) so that I utter as prophecy the riddles of God.

A few lines later, in flat contradiction to the above, the Sibyl calls herself the wife of Noah's son, who had witnessed the flood.

Of course, the Jewish Sibyl is not merely one person. At least five Jewish authors can be distinguished in the present collection of Sibyllines.

The first lived in Maccabean times, roughly about 160 B.C. He, or she, must have written at least three hundred lines of the so-called Third Book. It seems that Antiochus Epiphanes, the great persecutor of the Jews, is cryptically alluded to in the words, which somehow remind us of Daniel's prophecy :—

> To the shore of Asia shall come a man, unheard of before, having a purple robe cast about his shoulders, fierce, strange in judgment, fiery . . . all Asia shall pass under the yoke of oppression . . . yet even so death shall have him in his charge, and they whose children he would fain destroy, by their children shall his line be destroyed, putting out one root, which the Slayer of men shall cut off from among ten heads before it genders another shoot ; he shall cut off the warlike sire of the race bred in purple and perish himself at the hands of his grandsons, joined in a compact of war, and then a horn, an offshoot, shall reign.

This is apparently a description of the fortunes of the Seleucid dynasty, from Epiphanes to the usurper Tryphon. A second Jew seems to have written the short oracles against Rome, which are best dated in the time of Pompey, who, in 63 B.C., invaded the Holy Land and took Jerusalem.

> When Rome shall rule over Egypt, though still delaying, then shall the great kingdom of the immortal king appear among men and a holy king shall have rule over the whole earth for all ages of the course of time. Then shall implacable wrath fall upon the men of Latium. Three men shall ravage Rome with pitiable affliction and all men shall perish beneath their own roof tree when the torrent of fire shall flow down from heaven. Ah, wretched me, when shall that day come and the Judgment of the immortal God, the great king.

The three here referred to are usually taken to be the Second Triumvirate, Antony, Lepidus, and Octavius, and

Rome's rule over Egypt, the removal of Ptolemy Auletes in 51 B.C. We know a Sibylline Oracle was invoked on this occasion by the Romans themselves, but we may be certain it was not this.

A third Jew wrote the vv. 115-139 of Book IV, which tell in cryptic, yet unmistakable terms, of Nero's supposed flight across the Euphrates, the destruction of Jerusalem, the havoc wrought by Galba, Otto, and Vitellius, the earthquake of A.D. 76, and the Vesuvius eruption three years later.

A fourth Jew wrote Book V, with the exception of 1-51. He must have been a witness of the Fall of Jerusalem, so fierce and bitter are his words of hatred against Rome, so passionate his hope for its restoration.

A fifth Jew must have written the praise of the Emperor Hadrian (Book V, 46-51). These lines must have been composed in the very first period of his long reign of twenty-one years, in A.D. 117 or thereabouts, for Hadrian became the object of the fiercest Jewish hatred. It was he who crushed the Jewish rebellion under Bar Cocheba, and completely destroyed the Jewish commonwealth, but the Jews had once a hope that Hadrian would restore their temple. Here he is called "a silver-haired king, whose name is that of a sea (Adriatic!) a man of excellence and all discernment." A prayer is even uttered: Under thy sway, most excellent in goodness, glossy-haired Lord, and under that of thy branches, shall this empire be, all thy days.

Another Jew must have written the Ninth Book, as he betrays that he lived in the last years of the Emperor Trajan, by pretending to prophesy that the descendants of Æneas (i.e. the Romans) shall rule only: "as far as the Euphrates and Tigris, as far as Mesopotamia, but not the Assyrians where the Parthian rule extends." Parthian rule ceased in A.D. 226, and Roman armies crossed the Euphrates in A.D. 118.

Again, another Jew must have written part of the Eighth Book, which was composed in the time of Marcus Aurelius, 161-180. Finally, some other Jewish author wrote in Book

XII, in the middle of the third century after Christ, still expecting the restoration of the Jewish kingdom.

Probably a dozen different Jewish hands, if not more, worked at the Sibyllines from 160 B.C. to A.D. 240. The varying fortunes of the Jewish race for four hundred years are thus mirrored in this collection of Oracles. They are mostly Oracles of doom on Israel's foes, and rather poor copies of the *Burdens* against the Nations of Isaias, Jeremias, and Ezechiel. The destruction of the world by water, fire, war, pestilence, earthquake and famine, and the subsequent happiness of Israel in the Messianic kingdom are common places which grow monotonous. There are, however, some very interesting features now and then.

The first point is the ingenuity with which Sibylline prophets indicate the person designated by the number of the initial letter of his name, or by other rather childish devices. In the passage we translated above is a good example of this. In Greek the words for North, South, East and West begin with the letters A, D, A, M, hence, four-lettered Adam contains within himself the four points of the compass! The Emperor, whose Greek name is Adrianos, is called after a sea, the Adriatic! Whole lists of Roman Emperors are thus indicated, but the authors seem somewhat weak in matters of exact history.

Another interesting point consists in the various forms of the Nero legend, which show themselves in different parts of the book.

This Nero legend is rather a surprising thing.

Nero committed suicide on June 9th, A.D. 68. The myth that he was not dead, or even if dead, would somehow return, lived on for three hundred years. Nero died very young, he was just over thirty years old. This may account for the first suspicion that he was not really dead. Alexander died when he was thirty-three, and a similar legend arose. Nero began to reign as a boy of fourteen, he seemed destined to miraculous greatness from his birth; in the East he did not leave so bad an impression as in Rome itself. Pretenders arose claiming to be Nero, who had not really died.

One of them arose in Asia, and fled to the Parthian king, Artaban III, who thought of attacking the Roman Empire to restore this pseudo-Nero to his throne. Amongst Christians Nero was the embodiment of iniquity, as he began the Anti-Christian legislation in the empire and, according to Tacitus, put an *ingens multitudo* of Christians to death. Amongst Jews he was hated because he used 6,000 Jewish prisoners by forced labour to dig the canal which was to cut through the Isthmus of Corinth. Both to Christians and to Jews alike, Nero became a figure of the Antichrist. What Christians thought can be gathered from the *Apocalypse* and the Epistle, so-called, of Barnabas, both of the reign of Domitian; what Jews thought can be gathered from the Sibylline Oracles. Corinth shall lament her disaster, when destiny has brought again :—

> Him (Nero) who fled by guile, by the bank of the isthmus, till all behold him (Nero) who once cut through the rock with the blows of tools, then shall he destroy thy land, etc. For to him (Nero) God gave power to do deeds greater than all kings before him; first, with a sickle he shall tear out the roots of three heads (Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, the Flavian Emperors) and give them to others to feed on, so that they shall eat the flesh of the parents of the unholy king.—Bk. v. 222.
>
> One with the letter fifty (N=50 in Greek alphabet) shall be king, a fell dragon, breathing out grievous war, who shall lift his hand against his own people to slay them, and shall spread confusion, playing the athlete, charioteer, assassin, a man of many ill deeds; he shall cut through the mountain between two seas and stain it with blood; yet he shall vanish to destruction, then he shall return, making himself equal to God, but God shall reveal his nothingness.—Bk. v. 29-34.
>
> Then shall a great king from Italy flee away like a deserter, unseen, unheard of, beyond the ford of the Euphrates, after he has polluted his hands with the hateful murder of his mother. . . And many round his throne

shall drench the soil of Rome with their blood (Emperors Galba, Otto, and Vitellius) when he has fled beyond the land of Parthia . . . then shall come to the West the strife of stirring war and the exile of Rome (Nero), lifting up a mighty lance, crossing the Euphrates with many myriads. —Bk. iv. 137-139.

The Jews seem for a time actually to have hoped that the returning Nero would be God's instrument in avenging the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Besides the references to Nero in Books III, IV, and V, there is a lengthy description of him in Book X, vv. 78-95, and a shorter one in Book XI, 120-124. In the latter his return to Syria is again prophesied, in the former his death is taken for granted, and no return indicated.

Dio Chrysotom, who, if any one, could speak of the popular mind of Asia Minor, said early in the second century that most men believed that Nero was still alive. Almost two hundred years later a Christian writer, Victorinus of Pettau, in his commentary on the *Apocalypse*, could accept Nero's return as certainly true. But then this curious superstition gradually died, and was only sometimes hesitatingly mentioned for a century or so afterwards.

If Nero is mentioned often as if he were a sort of Anti-Christ, the Jewish Messias is alluded to still oftener. Only in Book IV is the personal Messias absent. This Messias will come down from heaven, and will set up the new and perfect temple of the Jews. Before he actually appears, the woes of the last days will afflict all men, there will be wars, fierce and all-devastating, but the people of God will triumph, led by the Messias, there will be signs in the heavens, there will be a war amongst the stars, a conflagration in heaven. Babylon (which mostly means Rome) will be burnt. At last a time of peace and plenty will come, the just will rejoice, the glory of the temple will be manifest. The heathen will be converted, the wicked will be destroyed. The Messias will judge the world. The Messias will reign on earth. There is no indication of a celestial reign of

the Messias in heaven. He will raise the dead (Book VIII, vv. 169-176), but these apparently live for ever happily in this world.

All this is stated in the wildest profusion and confusion, and it is difficult at any time to be certain, for a score or even a dozen lines, that one has to deal with a homogeneous section written by one author, without any re-editing by a subsequent writer.

Now and then some definite point in history seems recognized. Such is the Eruption of Vesuvius, in A.D. 63, the battle of Pydna in 168 B.C., the Julium Sidus, the bright comet which appeared in 44 B.C., and was thought to be the spirit of Julius Caesar, the disasters which befell Rhodes after the Roman war with Perseus in 169 B.C., the Bellum Civile in 91-89 B.C., the fall of Corinth and Carthage in 146 B.C., Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem in 60 B.C., the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and so on.

Of course, the Sibyl pretending to be the daughter of Noah, or at least to have lived before the Trojan War, and having supplied material to Homer, could always tell the story of the past. This she continually does under the guise of prophecy. Her superstitious readers hearing that she had foretold long sections of past history a thousand years before they came to pass, would the more readily believe the pretended prophecy of the immediate future.

Besides illustrating popular credulity and popular "hearsays" and legends, fears and hopes of the centuries immediately preceding and following the Christian era, the Sibyllines also gave an insight into the pagan manners of the day. The sexual corruption of the pagan world is again and again chastized, the unnatural crimes rebuked by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans, are often scathingly denounced, and the picture drawn of Gentile society is sombre in the extreme. Though sometimes the writer speaks of the conversion of the Gentiles, it is mostly the prophecy of doom and disaster which stirs his soul. He is like a Jonas, who cried: Only forty days and Ninive shall perish, and who

felt bitter grief when God did not destroy the wicked city, but showed mercy.

The Sibyllines illustrate the Jewish mind outside Palestine and especially, the mind of Jewry living in Egypt, for a great number of indications make it quite sure that much, if not the bulk, of the Jewish Sibyllines are due to Egyptian Jews. The book illustrates so-called liberal Judaism. Neither circumcision, nor Sabbath, nor the avoidance of unclean meats, nor any ceremonial laws are so much as hinted at, only monotheism, the Messianic hope, and chaste, charitable behaviour is emphasized. This accounts for the fact that the Sibyl is completely unknown to Talmudic literature, except in one passage. The Sibyllines could be described as merely a branch of Jewish Apocalyptics, were it not for the fact that they do not obtain their purpose by pictorial and highly intricate descriptions and visions and symbolic imagery as, for instance, that beautiful Jewish book, *Esdras IV*, or many parts of Enoch. They rather attempt by the monotony of endless hexameters, to set forth the certainty of terrible doom for idolaters.

XI

THE CHRISTIAN SIBYL

CHRISTIANS accepted the Jewish Sibyllines in perfect good faith as true and real prophecies. Books III, IV, and V, which preceded or were almost contemporary with the beginning of the Christian era, were regarded as writings of a quasi-sacred character. They embodied predictions of ancient pagan and Hebrew prophetesses, which, though in a sense imperfect, yet truly but dimly foretold the coming of the Great King and God's judgment on the world.

In St. Justin's first open letter, or so-called *Apology* to the Emperors Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, which he wrote in or about the year A.D. 152, there are two references to the Sibyl and Hystaspes. With Hystaspes' work we have dealt in the chapter on the Jewish Sibyl.

In the first letter (§20) we have the short statement: "Both Sibyl and Hystaspes said that there is to be a consumption of corruptible things by fire." This Stoic and Mazdaean tenet, which seems endorsed in the Old Testament, and especially in the Prophet Joel, does not particularly interest us, but a later reference (§44) is of extraordinary importance. St. Justin says to the Emperors:—

> Through the power of wicked spirits a decree of death was made against those who read the books of Hystaspes and the Sybil and the Prophets, in order, through fear, to turn men away from reading and receiving the knowledge of good and true things, and in order to keep men down in bondage. But after all they have not succeeded in doing this. For, not only do we read these books fearlessly, but, as you see, we bring them to you for

inspection, knowing that they must appear excellent to all. And though we may persuade but few, we shall be the gainers of the greatest treasures.

This passage shows the extraordinary veneration in which the Sibyllines must have been held amongst the Christians, that even the pagans forbade the reading of them under the death penalty. We note that St. Justin classifies these three together: Hystaspes, Sibyl, and the Prophets, by which last word he can only mean either the Book of the Apocalypse or the Prophets of the Old Testament. People have said that St. Justin must have been somewhat exaggerating when he spoke of the death penalty against readers. This, however, is extremely unlikely in a public document addressed to two Emperors. It has been thought that St. Justin refers to a law made under Tiberius, which made it a capital crime to consult diviners about the life of Cæsar or future history. But it is not likely that St. Justin here refers merely to a vague decree of over one hundred years before. The Roman authorities were continually driving into exile *mathematicos et philosophos*. The suspicious Domitian killed and exiled those whose opinions and magical arts he feared. There must have been some decree directly mentioning by name some books which were thus put on the Imperial Index, and the reading of which was punishable with death. St. Justin completely and defiantly identifies himself and his fellow-Christians with the readers of these books.

Another sidelight is thrown upon this matter, some twenty years later, by Celsus, in his pamphlet against the Christians, to which he gave the title: *A Word of Truth*. In a passage in which Celsus boasts that he knows the inner history of Christianity quite well, and refers to the Marcionites, the Valentinians, and the Gnostics, and distinguishes them from "the Great Church" or the bulk of Christians, he also mentions "Sibylists." Origen answers him by saying: "He, perhaps, overheard some (Christian) people finding fault with those who consider the Sibyl to

be a prophetess and, therefore, called them "Sibylists." In another passage Celsus taunts the Christians with seeking after novelties. Why were they not satisfied with such splendid figures as Hercules and Aesculapius? If they wanted an inspired man, why not Orpheus? If they wanted a strong moral character, there was Anaxarchus and Epictetus. Did your God, he asks, suffer more bravely then they? Celsus continues:

> And if you had called the Sibyl, whose authority some of your people use, the child (παῖς) of God, even that would have been more sensible. But now, since you have inserted in her writings much blasphemous matter, you want him (Jesus) to be a god, who ended an infamous life with a wretched death. Nay, Jonas, in the belly of the whale, or Daniel, saved from the jaws of the lions, would have been more suitable (than Christ as a god).

Origen answers Celsus' jibe about the Sibyl thus:—

> Then he (Celsus) adds—I really don't see why—that we would have done better, if we had called the Sibyl child (παῖς) of God rather than Jesus, and he affirms that many blasphemous things have been inserted by us in her writings. But he does not show what we have inserted. He would have proved his point if he had shown more ancient manuscripts which were free of such passages. Nor does he show how these things are blasphemous.

Origen, therefore, does not deny the existence of pro-Christian passages in the Sibyllines; he merely pleads for a verdict of "non-proven" with regard to the accusation of forgery. Celsus could only prove this by showing older manuscripts without them. This Celsus did not do. Origen allows the existence of some Christians, who are nicknamed "Sibylists" by other Christians, because they hold the Sibyl to be a prophetess. Origen himself is evidently not a Sibylist; he seems to have suspended his judgment in the matter. Celsus, however, seems to have been correctly

informed. It is highly probable that we can show what Sibylline passage he referred to. At first the passage may seem mere gibberish, and this for three reasons: it is in stilted pompous hexameters; it is purposely obscure, with the laboured obscurity of pretended prophecy; lastly, it is not Catholic but Gnostic:—

From the heart I proclaim the great and glorious Son of the Immortal One, to whom the Most High Begetter gave the throne as possession, when as yet He (the Son) was not born, for in the flesh that was given Him (the Son) He came forward (or rose) having been washed in the streaming waters of the river Jordan, who is carried (on the stream), with gleaming foot sweeping the waves. Who, as First One, having escaped the fire, will see the well-pleased god, who became by the Spirit through the shining wings of a dove. Now, He will blossom as a pure flower, and all things will burst forth luxuriously. And unto men He will show the ways and the heavenly paths, and He will teach all with wise words and lead also to righteousness, and He will persuade a hostile people, boasting the praiseworthy generation of (His) heavenly Father. He will walk on the waves and loosen the sicknesses of men. The dead He will raise and drive away many ills. And out of one basket of bread, men shall have their fill, when the House of David will sprout a Sprout. And in His hand is all the world and earth and heaven and sea. As lightning He will come down on the earth, as when the Two (Moses and Elias) at either side saw Him—as man (literally: one born) as a shining light. This will be when the earth rejoiceth in the hope of the Child (παῖς).

To thee, O Sodomitic land, bitter woes are destined, for it is thou who, evil-minded, didst not know thy God, who mocks at the plans of mortals, but thou didst plait a crown of thorns and mix fearful gall to satisfy pride and spirit. That will bring thee bitter woes!

O blessed wood, upon which God was stretched out,

the soil will not hold thee, the heavenly house thou shalt see, when the new fiery vision of God shall come as lightning.

This hymn is clearly not Catholic in tone; it must owe its origin to some Jewish-Gnostic Christian circles. At the baptism in the Jordan Christ is supposed to have been the first to see God (or a god or the god) who is well-pleasing, evidently the One referred to by Him spoke the words: "This is my dearly-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Greek word used is really, HEDUS: sweet, charming, well-pleasing. This God is described as "Becoming (γινόμενον) by the Spirit (or a spirit) through the shining wings of a dove."

The whole phraseology suggests the well-known Gnostic fancy of a divine Aeon, some emanation of the Father, descending at the Baptism on the man Jesus, who was the first to see this divine Aeon, "the Son from eternity hidden with the Father," but who then took possession of the manhood of Christ.

The words "fleeing out of," or "escaping from the fire," is likewise a very early, probably originally Gnostic, fancy of the great flame or fire seen at the Baptism of Christ. It occurs here and there in early Christian literature. The Gospel of the Ebionites, i.e. heretical Jewish Christians, contained after the baptism of Christ the words: "And forthwith there flashed around the place a great light." This or some similar statement occurs in a number of ancient sources.

The statement that God was "stretched out" on the Cross, however orthodox in itself, suggests Docetism, by its avoidance of the word suffering.

Lower down, in Book VII, 65–95, there is a similar Gnostic passage about Christ. Instead of the sacrifice of lambs and the burning of incense, the following ceremonial is commanded: together with thy blood relatives, take a wild bird, pray with the eyes lifted to heaven, send it away, and pour water into the pure fire, saying as follows:

"Father, who has begotten Thee, the Word, I have sent off a bird; Word, swift Announcer of words, with holy waters I sprinkled thy baptism, through which Thou didst appear out of the fire."

No wonder that many orthodox Christians looked askance at Sibyllines which contained such questionable doctrines. Yet, in many circles they were thought to contain admirable truths.

In the so-called *Exhortation to the Greeks*, often ascribed to St. Justin, but written at least two generations later, we read :—

> O ye men of Greece, as nothing of the true worship of God is contained in the poets and in writings held in honour amongst you for their learning, therefore, leaving the excessive refinement of songs and orations, turn at last to the sayings of the Sibyl, without cavil or contention, and acknowledge of what good things she is for you the source, foretelling clearly and plainly the coming of Our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Quite towards the end of the exhortation pseudo-Justin once more turns to his readers, imploring them, as they value their salvation, to trust the ancient Sibyl.

He quotes three short passages, but none directly refers to Christ; they only inculcate the unity of the Godhead. What precise passage the author had in his mind, and which he implores the Greeks to read, we cannot say.

Clement of Alexandria, who lived about the same time as the author of the *Exhortatio* (he died before A.D. 215), likewise begs people to acknowledge the Sibyl, and, strange to say, he puts his words on the lips of St. Paul himself. These words he read most probably in that ancient apocryphal work called *The Acts of Paul*, although in the extant collection of fragments of this quaint book the words are not found. This is the passage :—

> Paul the Apostle declares that, in the way as God willed the Jews to be saved, by giving them prophets, so likewise

the most illustrious of the Greeks also God inspired, as prophets in their own language, as far as they were able to receive this gift, and set them apart from the common people. St. Paul said: Take also the Greek books, acknowledge the Sibyl, how she makes known the one God, and what is going to happen in the future; and take Hystaspes and read, and you will find the Son of God described much more clearly and plainly, and how against the Christ many kings stand in battle array, because they hate Him and those that bear His name and His faithful, and His endurance and His coming.

To which passage *The Acts of Paul* refer is difficult to say. It may not have been a Christian passage at all, for a Jew might so paraphrase Psalm ii: "The kings of the earth stood up and the princes met together, against the Lord and against his Christ. The Lord hath said to me: Thou art my son, this day I have begotten thee," then his paraphrase would appear to be a plain prophecy of Our Blessed Lord.

On the other hand, Book I, vv. 324–386, contains a very ancient pretended prophecy of Our Lord's coming, which may well have been meant The previous 323 verses deal with the ante-diluvian Patriarchs, with Noah and the deluge, with God's promise not again to destroy the world by water and with the boundaries "the Great God" set to the sea. These Jewish verses are suddenly interrupted thus:—

Then indeed shall also come unto men the Child (*παῖς*) of "the Great God," incarnate (*σαρκοφόρος*, flesh-bearing), made like unto mortals on earth, bearing four vowels (*ι, η, ο, υ*), but of consonants I announce two (*σ, ς*), but as complete number I will name eight, eighty, and eight hundred (*η*=8, *ς*=200, *ο*=80, *υ*=400, *ς*=200 = 888. ΗΣΟΥΣ, pronounce: eesoos for ΙΗΣΟΥΣ) Thus, will he show his name unto unbelieving men, but thou in thy mind think of Christ the Child (*παιδός*), of the immortal God. He will fulfill the law of God, not dissolve it. Bearing the antitype image (*antitypon mimema*) and will teach all things.

Then follows a short sketch of Our Lord's life: the coming of the Magi, the preaching and death of the Baptist, Christ's sudden arrival out of Egypt, His preaching, His miracles, His feeding 5,000 with five loaves and *one* fish, and leaving twelve baskets "for Holy Virgin," His rejection by Israel who do great mischief to the "Holy Child (παῖδα) of God," giving Him blows, spitting upon Him, and giving Him gall.

> When He has stretched out His hands and measured all things, when He carried the Crown of thorns, and when they pierce His side with a lance, when three hours' darkness comes, then the Temple will show a great miracle, when He descends into Hades, and announces the resurrection of the dead. After three days He comes again to the light and will show to mortals a (or the) Typus and teach all things.

He ascends on the clouds and leaves to the world the Gospel. A Roman king will come at harvest time and plunder the Jews. Other kingdoms and kings shall arise. When the Temple on sacred soil shall fall in ruins, and the Jews are driven into exile, they shall sow tares amongst the wheat. Then, to all men shall come the great sedition, civil war and distress and the wrath of the Great God.

Now, this piece is manifestly also from a Jewish-Gnostic Christian. It is certainly Docetic. Christ's body is not real, it is an ἀντίτυπον μίμημα, *antitypical simulacrum*. Christ stretches His hands out on the Cross, but nothing is said about His suffering. In the Passion only dishonouring things are mentioned, such as blows, spittle, and the Crown. The shame is emphasized, not the pain.

Christ comes suddenly out of Egypt; thus, His human birth is slurred over. The twelve baskets are for "the Holy Virgin"; her Motherhood is passed over. The author is a converted Jew; hence his reference to the fact that Christ came to fulfil the law, not to dissolve it; hence, also, his bitterness against his former co-religionists, and his reference to Palestine as "sacred soil." His twofold mention of the *Salomonic* instead of the Herodian temple, unless due to the

requirements of the metre, shows that he is not very exact in his wording.

In the Second Book this Jewish Christian continues with a description of Christ coming to judgment and giving to everyone according to his works, to the martyrs, to the virgins, to all the just of other lands, who acknowledged one God and led blameless lives, and also to the married.

This reference to the married, as worthy of a reward, is not merely a casual addition, it is surely a deliberate polemic against the condemnation of marriage among some Gnostics. The passage runs :—

> But to those who love marriage and keep themselves free from adultery, He will give rich gifts, yea, everlasting hope even to those. For every soul of man is a charisma of God, and no man has a right to soil it with all sorts of pains.

Gnostics held in principle that the infusion of a soul into a body was a curse, not a blessing ; this Gnostic tenet the author rejects. After this passage comes the long piece of Phokylides, of which we wrote in the chapter on the Jewish Sibyl, and after Phokylides some 200 verses referring to the last Judgment. Part of these are certainly by a Christian, perhaps they are all by a Jewish Christian, who mixes together Jewish and Christian ideas and expressions. Some very Dantesque lines in this section are not without some gruesome grandeur.

It is most remarkable that in the Eighth Book the very same early Docetic hymn once more occurs, so re-edited and recast and deformed that at first a careless reader might pass it over, yet on careful reading the literary dependence is unmistakable. I mean the verses 256-323. It directly contradicts the statement of the second passage. Instead of the words : " He will fulfil the law of God, not dissolve it," which are a clear allusion to Christ's own words in St. Matthew, we read :—

> They (His executioners) shall beat His sides with a rod

on account of their Law, for from rods, swayed by another Spirit, it (the Law) was destined to condemnation of the soul, of wrath and of punishment (an echo of St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans). But when all whatsoever I have said shall be fulfilled, then unto Him every law is dissolved. By decrees of men every such law was given in the beginning on account of the disobedient nation, but He will stretch out His hands and measure the whole world. . . . The temple curtain was rent, and at noon shall be during three hours mighty darksome night, for now that the Eternal Lord descends on the earth, it is again shown, what was hidden through the imaginings of the world, that one should not worship the Temple and the cryptic Law.

A few lines later :—

He appeared meek unto all that He might lift the yoke which we bore, the slavish one, the one hard to bear, which was lying on our necks, and that He might dissolve the godless rules and the violent bonds.

The polemic against the observance of the Mosaic law could not be plainer.

If on this point this section contradicts the previous one, on other points it completely agrees. The very words : *Antitypical simulacrum*, and the reference to " the pure Virgin " reoccur, and Christ's torments by the wicked are described in the same order and similar words. The twelve baskets of the Feeding of the Five Thousand are said to be " for a hope of the nations," but further down it is said that God, whom they give blows with ignorant hands, shall surrender unto the world " the pure Virgin." The piece begins with the quaint fancy of God the Father saying to God the Son :—

" Son (τέκνον) let us both make the tribes of men, framing them to our own image. I (the Father) now with hands, but thou afterwards shalt heal our form, that we may give a common existence (ἀνάστασιν)." Remembering this decision He (God the Son) will come into the

world bearing the *antitypon mimema* unto the pure Virgin, at the same time, in water enlightening, through presbyters' hands, doing all by word and healing every ill.

This is mere Gnosticism. The Son is the Aeon, Logos; the pure Virgin is not Our Blessed Lady, but some such conception of divine Wisdom, Sophia, incarnate in the world. I suspect that it was a very ancient term for the Church, the Bride of Christ. Twice in the Sibyllines we read that through *the pure Virgin* God has given seven ages for repentance, viii, 253. In this sense, surely, it occurs in the Abercius inscription:

> Everywhere *the Pure Virgin* set forth as food the great and pure ΙΧΘΥΣ, which she took from the spring, and gave Him throughout to friends to eat, having also excellent wine (or: Chrestos as wine), giving a mixed cup with the Bread.

Now, we know that Abercius, towards the end of the second century, wrote against the Phrygian prophetess, thirteen years after her death, probably A.D. 193. He boasted that none of her gloomy predictions had become true, "neither a partial nor a general war had happened in the world; on the contrary, Christians had rather had permanent peace." Maximilla then was a heretical or schismatical Christian prophetess, who foretold imminent disaster to the world; was she perhaps the Sibyl, who speaks to us in some sections of our present Sibyllines? She certainly tells of a gruesome future. Immediately after the passage in question she tells us that "the earth, drenched with blood, shall groan with wars."

Tertullian, in his Montanist work, *De Pudicitia*, accuses the Catholics that, by giving absolution to adulterers, they dishonour the Church; he feels shocked that the Pope's decree, allowing absolution for sins of the flesh, should be read in the Church, and suddenly says: *in Ecclesia pronuntiatur, et virgo est!* Possibly, the *Ecclesia virgo* was a slogan of the Montanists against the Catholics, who pleaded

the pity of the *Ecclesia mater* for forgiveness, even of sins of the flesh.

Extraordinary fortune has attended an elaborate acrostic poem (Book VIII, vv. 217–250) of which the first letters of the lines make up the word Jesus Christ, God's Son, Saviour, Cross, i.e. ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΣ. ΣΩΤΕΡ, ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ. The poem has nothing remarkable, it is a description of Christ coming in judgment, in the usual Sibyllistic style, heaping horror upon horror. It contains nothing in any way unorthodox. Not much is said of the reward of the good, but more of the punishment of the wicked. The latter part is a commentary on the words of Psalm ii: "Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron . . . . and now ye kings understand!"

According to Eusebius, the Emperor Constantine quoted it in full in his address to "the Congregation of the Saints," and he adds this tantalizing bit of information:

> The Sibylla of Erythrae, who says that she lived in the sixth age after the deluge, was a priestess of Apollo, who bore a crown (*diadema*) like the god whom she worshipped. She guarded the tripod, round which a serpent is wound, giving oracular answers to those who consulted her. Through the folly of her parents she was dedicated to such a cult, through which shameful passions and nothing grave comes to pass, in the same way as the story goes about Daphne. Now she, having been driven into the shrine of this inept superstition, and becoming in reality filled with divine inspiration, prophesied the future in verses about God.

Then follows the poem, after which he says: "Thus, it befell the virgin from God to announce. I hold her happy whom the Saviour chose as prophetess of His providence for us." The writer is keenly conscious that many will attack the genuineness of the poem. He then enters into a long vindication of its real prophetical character, and tries to prove that it was used by Virgil, who died forty years before Christ, in his famous Fourth Eclogue.

The writer, who is most completely under the spell of the Sibyl is, doubtless, Lactantius, who, being called by Diocletian to be Public Orator at his Imperial residence at Nicomedia, before A.D. 300, must have come across the Sibyllines in the original home of the Sibyl. Well, Lactantius may have been a Christian Cicero, but he was a very indifferent theologian, and no theological peccadillos of the Sibyl are likely to have troubled him. Book VII of his *Institutiones* is a cento of Sibylline quotations.

Does the Sibyl then nowhere refer to herself, and does she in no way betray her personality? The most baffling part of our problem is that, as a matter of fact, she does refer to herself on several occasions, and that in the most explicit manner, in order to proclaim that she has been a great sinner.

At the end of Book VII we read that, after the woes preceding the Messianic age, God:—

> Will create unto men a pure spirit, and establish a new generation, as it was of yore. No more plough shall cut deep furrows, no more oxen sink the guiding line across the fields, no grapes nor corn shall be, but all crush with shining teeth the manna that comes down as the dew. And with them shall also be God to teach them, as He has taught me, the mourning one. For the evil I did formerly, I know, and many other things which I wrought carelessly. I had a thousand lovers, but of wedlock I did not think. All untaught I led them all into wild oaths. Those in need I locked out, but going amongst the out-goers into the valley I went into the same, God's utterance I knew not. Hence, the fire consumed me, and will devour me, for I, indeed I shall not live, but the evil time shall destroy me. Then men shall erect me a grave, approaching me by the sea and with stones they shall destroy me. For on account of my father I obtained a dear son. Stone me, throw all of you, thus, I shall live and towards heaven fix my eyes.

At the end of the Second Book we find a similar confession

of sin, after a description of doom and of heaven for the saved.

> Oh, oh, I, wretched one! what shall happen to me in that day? Since I attempted to exceed all in sin, having no regard for wedlock or for reason. But even in my rich abode of a wealthy man I locked out those in need, and what was against the law I formerly wrought with full knowledge. But thou, Saviour, from my scourgings deliver me, shameless one, who have wrought shameful things.

As these passages occur at the end of the Second and Eighth Book, and immediately after sections that are Christian in tone; as, further, in one of these passages, the Saviour is addressed; as, moreover, the passages very much stress the loss of chastity, I think we can safely attribute them to a Christian Magdalen, who repented of her sin. The idea sometimes put forward that they are deliberate mystifications is surely untenable. Such things are no inventions. The references to the child, to her father, to the house of her wealthy lover, to her heartlessness towards the poor, ring too natural to be a weird and senseless make-belief.

The heathen Sibyl claimed to be παρθένος ἀδμής, an unwedded virgin; the Jewish Sibyl to be a daughter-in-law or wife of Noah; the Babylonian one a daughter of Berossos, the famous Babylonian priest. All these claims are intelligible, but the claim to be a sinner is not one which is intelligible under the circumstances unless it were based on fact.

Was she a Catholic or not? I doubt it. It depends on whether she is the authoress of the few undoubtedly Catholic passages in the whole collection. The bulk of the Christian passages are all by the same hand. Even in the few lines which the Christian Sibyl inserted in the almost purely Pagan-Jewish Books, III, IV, and V, she betrays herself by her suspicious phraseology.

Here is the first passage (Book III, 93–96):—

Then shall come forth the judgment of the great God, in the great age, when all these things come to pass. Oh, for the waters, where go the ships, and for all the dry land, when that Sun rises, which shall not set again! All things shall obey Him (Christ) when He returns to the world; therefore, was He first to know His own power.

It is the last sentence which betrays the heretic: "He was the first to know His own power." This is the same thought as that embodied in words (Book VI, 6) which we have already quoted: "Who, having escaped from the fire (at His baptism in the Jordan) was the First to see the well pleasing god."

The second passage is in Book V, 256–259:—

But there shall be one Man beyond compare from the sky (ether) who stretched out the palms of His hands upon the fruitful tree, the Best of the Hebrews, who at some time shall stay the sun in its course, calling upon it with fair speech and holy lips.

Here we have again the phrase we met thrice before, of "stretching out his hands upon the tree," without any indication of suffering. Moreover, he is from the ether; this possibly refers to Christ's second coming, but much more probably to His first, I mean, to the Gnostic descent of "the Heavenly Man" upon Jesus at His baptism. The prophecy of Christ bidding the sun stand still either refers to the darkness at Christ's death or to the promise of everlasting day in the life to come. Christ is called "the best of the Hebrews," which is too faint a praise of God-Incarnate, not to be damning evidence against him who uses it.

But not all the Christian Sibyl wrote is suspect of heresy. There are some passages of singular beauty which are above all suspicion. I have tried to render one in English hexameters, which, however imperfect, are better than a bald prose translation (Book VIII, 457–480):—

But in the fulness of time this, our earth here below, did
He alter,

Coming in littleness down and then leaving the virginal bosom.
As a new light He arose out of Mary, and coming from Heaven,
Vested Himself with a form that was human. Now, Gabriel, therefore,
Mighty and holy of stature, came first and was manifest to her,
Afterwards, using no messenger, God spoke and said to the maiden :
" Virgin, take God in thy bosom immaculate " ! While He was speaking,
Graciously giving her grace, she, who virgin for ever remaineth,
Terror befel her and trembling, so stood she, her mind full of anguish,
Hearing these words so unwonted, her heart she felt throbbing within her.
Soon, however, again she rejoiced and her innermost being exulted
With happy laughter. The cheeks of the maiden were red as the roses,
Filled with sweet merriness, modestly, though her gladness restraining.
Confidence came to her. Then did the Word overshadow her, coming
Into her womb. He that moment incarnate was living within her.
He was endowed with the form of a man and born of a virgin,
Entered this world as a Babe and it was a great wonder to mortals.
But unto God, who is Father and Son, nothing causes amazement.
Now, at the birth of the Child leapt forward the earth in rejoicing
And even around God's throne there resounded heavenly laughter.

And the Great All of Creation rejoiced. Then the Star of the Magi,
As a new light in the sky and a prophecy, gladly they followed.
Swathed in poor bands in the Crib was the Child shown to the righteous.
Bethlehem was chosen by God of His Word to be truly the homestead
Where once the Shepherds did watch with the flocks of their goats and their sheep and their oxen.

To conclude. The Christian Sibyl contains heterodox passages which may well go back to the beginning of the second century. She uses a Jewish, Docetic, Gnostic hymn (Book VI) which she first quotes, and subsequently thrice re-edits, and twice again quotes. She gives scores of lines in praise of the poor, and continually rebukes the rich. She is almost communistic in tone, claiming that in the Messianic kingdom the rich shall be levelled to the level of the poor. She seems to be one of the sect of the Ebionites, אביונים that is "the poor." It is natural to think that the Christian, who recast and embodied the Jewish Sibyllines (Books III, IV, and V, especially) into her own prophecies, was a Jewess herself. Unfortunately, she was only half a convert from Judaism, for she never accepted the true doctrine of the Incarnation, but lost herself in Ebionitic Gnosticism. On the other hand there is a Catholic Sibyl who, however, is somewhat later than her heretical sister, but certainly not much later than the death of the Emperor Alexander Severus (18th March, 235), and probably earlier.

In the East the influence of the Christian Sibyl was very short. Only in the third century is her influence vigorous and widespread, the great Greek Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries ignore her. In the West her power lasted longer. Lactantius trusted her, even the great St. Augustine placed her among the citizens of the *Civitas Dei*. This may be due to two causes. The Romans, ever since early Pagan times took the Sibyl much more seriously than the Greeks.

Secondly, it seems that through Tertullian the West became acquainted with Christian prophetesses of Phrygia. Even Rome itself, so says Tertullian, for a while acknowledged them, but in their native districts it was true of them as of others: *nemo propheta in patria sua.*

In the West reverence for the Sibyl continued during the Middle Ages, though the text of her Greek Oracles was completely unknown. A collection of oracles in latin prose was ascribed to the Sibyl of Tibur and gained great popularity. This compilation contains much that goes back to a greek original of the fourth century. It is this collection no doubt which inspired the well-known words of the Dies Irae: *Teste David cum Sibylla*, by Thomas of Celano, c. A.D. 1250. A late Paris Missal did, indeed, change this to *Crucis expandens vexilla*, but Celano's words have prevailed and are likely to prevail for many a year, thus reminding us of one of the strangest workings of the Spirit of God in ancient days.

XII

PHILO'S LIFE

PHILO must have been a youth of about twenty when Mary and Joseph fled with their Child to Egypt. He was a rich young man, and it is unlikely that he ever came in contact with these humble visitors from Palestine. In later years, when he made his pilgrimage to the Holy City, as a devout Jew should, he may have heard of Jesus of Nazareth and His wonderful doings, and as an old man he no doubt heard of the strange prophesyings that happened in Jerusalem at Whitsuntide. But Philo was surely dead before St. Mark founded the Church at Alexandria. There is a report in Eusebius that he became a Christian, but there is nothing whatever in his extensive writings to support this rumour. As a man well over seventy he may have met the eloquent Apollo, the fellow missionary of St. Paul, but to suppose that he did so would be the merest guess. There is but one fact which would find explanation if Philo became Christian in his old age, and that is the strange and remarkable fact that Philo's name does not occur in any Talmudic writings whatever. Such complete *damnatio memoriae* of so prolific and eminent a writer in the annals of his own people is hard to explain, except on the supposition that the heads of Jewry deliberately expunged any reference to him in their literature and decreed that his name should not be mentioned in Israel.

Be this as it may, we can only deal with Philo as we find him in his extant writings and in the few references to him in Josephus. From these we gather that he belonged to the foremost Jewish family in Alexandria. His brother was Alabarch of the Jews in that city. It is not quite certain

what the functions of this office were—possibly Chief Officer of Inland Revenue would be the best description of this dignity, if we have not to seek a higher title, such as a Lord of the Exchequer. In any case his position was of such eminence that Josephus could say that he was the principal person among all his contemporaries, both for his family and his wealth. He was an old friend of the Emperor Claudius ; he had been financial agent to his mother, Antonia ; and he was by marriage connected with King Agrippa, whose sister had married Marcus, the Alabarch's son. His other son, Tiberius, became for a few years Roman Governor of Judea, but seems to have obtained that post by apostasy from Judaism. This family of Jewish bankers was wealthy enough to lend great sums to royalty. During the great anti-Jewish troubles in Alexandria the Alabarch was for some time imprisoned by order of the Emperor, but released on the accession of Claudius.

Philo, therefore, was right in the centre of the political turmoils of his time. We have few details of his own activities in these matters, but he must again and again have been drawn into the fierce contests of the factions in the city. He gives us a description of the fiscal oppression practised in Alexandria of which he himself was witness. His words betray deep sympathy with the sufferings of the people, and it is to be hoped that his brother, the Alabarch, mitigated these evils during his term of office.

Here is a specimen of fiscal extortion.

Recently, out of fear for unbearable punishment, some people who, through poverty, were in arrears with their taxes fled the country. In consequence, a man who was appointed tax-gatherer amongst us violently dragged off their wives, children, parents and all other relatives. He struck and tortured them and subjected them to shameful violence in order that they should either betray the fugitives or pay the arrears. They were able to do neither because they did not know where the fugitives were, and because they were just as poor as those who had escaped. But the tax-gatherer did not let them go till he had mangled their bodies with all

sorts of implements of torture and murdered them under unheard of cruelties. He filled baskets with sand and bound this heavy burden on their necks and exposed them in the market to the open air. He sought to drive them to despair under their punishments, the burning sun, the rough weather, the mockery of the passers by, and the weight of the burdens on their necks. Many who witnessed this took warning and ended their own lives by the sword or poison or the halter. Those who did not commit suicide were sued in due order, first the next of kin, then the relatives in the second and third degree, and when the number of relatives gave out, then the neighbours, till whole villages and towns became empty through people fleeing the danger (*De Spec. Leg.* III, 159).

Philo's brother, multi-millionaire and prominent statesman as he was, remained true to the religion of his forefathers and receives praise from Josephus on that account. Not so his son Tiberius Alexander. This man was no doubt an able soldier. He was on the General Staff of the Roman Army in Persia with General Corbulo ; he was for two years Governor of Judea, and finally, in A.D. 66, Governor of Egypt, but he was a public apostate from Judaism and overt professor of paganism. We know all this from Josephus, for Philo himself only introduces us to his young nephew in two of his writings (*De Providentia* and *De Animalibus*). He speaks of him as an able and charming young man to whom he had promised his own daughter for wife, and he refers to himself as a happy combination of uncle and father-in-law. This daughter is the only child of Philo of which we have any record. Philo possessed an excellent wife of whom the story goes that when teased about her simple attire and lack of jewellery she answered : "My good husband is better than the best jewellery." In the two dialogues referred to Philo makes his future son-in-law defend very unorthodox opinions, the denial of the existence of a divine Providence, and the theory that animals have souls as well as men. Perhaps the young man very early betrayed a sceptical turn of mind, which Philo

treats with an indulgent smile, not forseeing in it a foreboding of future apostasy.

Philo has sometimes been represented as a mere philosopher and recluse so as not to know what was going on in the world. This, however, is not the impression one obtains if one has the patience to read him through. Many a keen remark about the duty of rulers and many a shrewd observation about the wealhty classes show that Philo, though a contemplative and a student, was not ignorant of public affairs. The choice of his fellow country men, who placed him at the head of the embassy to the Emperor Caius at the height of a political crisis, proves that they trusted his political ability. In fact, he himself betrays his contempt for the hypocritical abandonment of public life for asceticism without first having acquired knowledge of what it is that is abandoned.

> " In truth one has reason to blame those who without examination abandon the business and the control of civil life and who say that they have learnt to despise glory and pleasure. The behaviour of these men is really insolence. They do not really despise these things, making an open boast of their sordid melancholy and stern appearance, and putting forward their austere and dirty way of living as a bait, as if they were in love with temperate behaviour and modesty and endurance, but they are not able to deceive those who look into them somewhat more closely " (*On Fugitives*, VI).

Philo was very much the gentleman-philosopher and if he wrote *De Vita Contemplativa*, his admiration for the Jewish Fathers of the Desert must have been more academic than practical, or the book must have betrayed a mood which he did not habitually feel. For all that, Philo, in his writings, strongly stresses his predilection for solitude and his craving for a meditative life. He was a Jewish counterpart of the philosopher-statesman Seneca, his younger contemporary.

Philo left us two writings which deal directly with the political affairs of Alexandria. He wrote the historical

essay *Against Flaccus*. This Flaccus was Roman Governor of Egypt. His character strangely resembled that of his contemporary, Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judea. Anyone who wants the explanation of the strange weakness of Pilate towards the native leaders in Palestine and his dread of denunciation to Rome should read the story of Flaccus. Flaccus persecuted the Jews, or rather, he allowed the Egyptian populace to persecute them, and publicly aided and abetted them in their cruelties towards the Hebrews who formed almost half the number of inhabitants of Alexandria. He did so, not from any particular hatred for them, but from pressure of circumstances. The man was a weakling who dreaded the mob. He feared lest they should denounce him to Rome as there was so much in his administration which could not bear investigation. During the first years of his rule he held the balance fairly well between the Jewish and Pagan sections of the town, but then he veered round to the majority in the hope of ingratiating himself with them and so making his position secure. He practically surrendered the Jews to their enemies, but his fate was like that of the Governor of Judea. Two or three years after Pilate's recall, he too was recalled by the Imperial Government. Pilate was exiled to the South of France, Flaccus to a small island off the Ionian coast. Not long after his arrival there he was put to death by order of the Emperor. Reading over the gruesome account of his last days, the reader cannot but be unpleasantly struck by the glee with which Philo gloats over the slow agony of the enemy of his race. Philo, of course, depicts it as a triumph of God's vengeance over Israel's foes, but he can hardly hide his malignant joy. Judging from this treatise and from many incidental remarks in Philo's other writings, the Christian reader concludes that Philo no doubt was a righteous but also a hard man. Whatever sympathy he had was strictly limited to the just and to his own people; the unrighteous and the Pagan could expect but little pity from him.

Philo's other historical-political treatise deals with his embassy to the Imperial madman Caius, who wanted to be

adored as a god and have his statue erected in Jerusalem. The whole affair is well told and invaluable as a description of what the Jewish and Pagan world was like ten years after the resurrection of Christ. The terrified group of Jewish delegates were fooled and cajoled by the Imperial court; for months and months they waited and travelled after the young maniac in the hope of obtaining a hearing. They at last saw him and were subjected to the buffoonery of himself and his flunkeys. Their very lives depended on some insane whim of the man to whom they had to explain why they did not eat pork and why they did not adore him. While they pleaded he could not even stop a minute to listen to their answers. All this forms a picture which no reader easily forgets, and excites pity for the grey hairs of Philo, who, in old age, was subjected to such indignity. If king Agrippa, Caius' former boon companion and dearest friend, almost died of fear at the glare of Caius' mad eyes, and wrote the most abject and cringing letter it is possible for one man to write to another, we cannot but admire the pluck of the old man of Alexandria, who stood his ground in the presence of this maniac.

There was something fine in this veteran who, after the audience, could cheer his companions with the thought that their cause was now sure to win, considering that Caius had made even God his enemy and almost forced His divine Majesty to intervene in favour of the Jews. It is a satisfaction to know that Philo saw better days under Claudius, who made ample amends to the Jews for the persecution of his predecessor.

If Philo had difficulties with the world outside Jewry, he could not have been without his troubles with his own co-religionists. In Alexandria there was danger of what we should now call Modernism. The fierce fanaticism of Palestinian Judaism was there replaced by alarming liberalism which Philo evidently feared and to which he often refers in his writings. In the story of Cain and Abel he sees symbolized the unceasing attack of the worldly wise on those who do not grasp the world's sophistry. They

do not merely trouble their own folk but " they distress the otherwise virtue-loving multitude of Israel, appointing over them rulers and teachers of evil works." He writes in *De migratione Abraham*, " Some people regard the written laws as mere symbols of abstract truths and study these truths with great care, but the laws themselves they neglect. I cannot approve of their lax ways. Because the seventh day signifies the power of the uncreated God and the repose of creation, it does not follow that one may neglect the laws that refer to it, such as lighting fires, tilling the soil, carrying burdens, pleading or giving judgment in court, reclaiming deposits, handling gains ; in fact, doing what is permitted on ordinary days. Just because a feast is a symbol of the joy of soul and its gratitude towards God, that is no reason for not observing the yearly solemnities. Because circumcision symbolises the restraint of pleasures and passions, that is no reason for considering the law of circumcision no longer binding."

The bulk of the Jews in Alexandria were no doubt true to their religion, for their very numbers and social and civil cohesion made this less difficult ; but among the higher classes there were surely many who went the way of Tiberius Alexander, Philo's own nephew. The other antagonists with whom Philo had to contend were those of his own faith who were scandalized at his allegorical treatment of the Scriptures. His commentaries are full of polemics against those who wanted a literal meaning for every passage of Scripture. He sometimes defies them to find a satisfactory literal meaning for a text, a meaning which would not lead to an absurdity, or to something derogatory to the dignity of God. Philo did not demand an exclusively allegorical meaning for all passages in the Bible. He too acknowledged a literal meaning in many instances, but he seems to have held that all passages were capable of an allegorical interpretation, even though they had a literal one also. The Mosaic laws he wished to be literally observed, though they had their mystic significance. It was mostly in the historical passages, especially those which seemed little flattering to

the character of Israel's ancestors, or too human for the spirituality of God, that Philo sought a hidden meaning. This hidden meaning is often to our ideas exceedingly far-fetched and would naturally have given scandal to his less sophisticated Jewish neighbours.

The most amazing feat of interpretation is the application of all the matrimonial complications of the patriarchs and prophets to the mental and religious life of the individual soul. It is clever in a way, but also laughable.

Sarai means "my kingdom," and represents virtue. Hagar means "sojourner," and represents intermediate instruction, or preliminary mental training. Hence, Sarai advises Abraham to go to her handmaid Hagar, for Virtue is barren unless the preliminary sciences—grammar, rhetoric, music, etc.—are first acquired. Rachel means "sight of profanation," and Leah, "smooth motion" (λεῖα in Greek). Rachel therefore represents the external senses and parts of speech by which we are told to look contemptuously on profane things. Leah represents smooth health, producing virtue and justice. Zilpah, a secondary wife of Jacob, means "a mouth going forth," whereas Billah, the name of another wife, means "swallowing." Therefore Zilpah is a symbol of nature, interpreting and speaking, whereas Billah stands for the first needs of bodily nature, such as the taking of food. Rebekkah stands for repentance. Ephraim means "fruit-bearing," which stands for memory. Manasseh means "recollection"! Now, recollection stands for recalling things already forgotten, hence it is only a second child after Ephraim=Memory. This explains why Manasseh is Ephraim's younger brother. Manasseh's concubine was a Syrian by birth. Syria stands for "insolent and overbearing." She naturally lives with Manasseh or "the man who forgets." For the word Syria (Aram in Hebrew) means sublimity. (Aram=the highlands in contrast to Canaan the lowlands.) The son of this concubine is called Machir. Now the Greeks interpret the name Machir as meaning "of the father" (?—I suspect a Greek text read Patir instead of Machir). Now, those who recollect a

thing imagine that the mind is the father of and cause of their recollecting. Nachor, the name of Abraham's brother, means " a rest from light." He had a wife called Milcah, which means " queen," and a concubine called Rumah, which means " she who sees something."

Thus on and on. Philo weaves together psychology with philology and ethics in the most surprising and weird way His etymologies are often the most absurd possible. Obviously he knew Hebrew quite well, but he uses his knowledge to torture the Old Testament proper names into all sorts of bizarre shapes, and on the slightest similarity of sound he makes them mean all sorts of queer and wonderful things. When his Hebrew etymologies give out, he takes refuge in Greek derivations, sure as he is that the names contain some mystic meaning somehow.

> " The wicked also, so he maintains, have a desire for concubines, that is, for vain opinions and doctrines. Accordingly Moses tells us that Thimna, the concubine of Eliphah, the son of Esau, bore Amalek to Eliphah. Alas, for the eminent ignobleness of this descendant! You will see this ignobleness more clearly if you abandon the idea that this expression is used about a man, and rather consider the soul with a kind of anatomical dissection. The true historian then must call irrational and immoderate desires and impetuous passions Amalek. Now the word Amalek, being interpreted, means ' the people looking up.' Eliphah means ' God has scattered me.' Amalek thus symbolizes passion boiling over, licking up and destroying all it meets. It is only natural that he should be the son of Eliphah=God scattering the soul! "

Did Philo write such stuff for sport and with his tongue in his cheek? I hardly think so. He is always so grave and measured in speech, and nowhere betrays any sense of humour. He was logical in his own way. For him the five books of Moses, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy were the highest manifestation of the Godhead

on earth. The remainder of the Old Testament, the great prophets, the real glory of Israel, and the historical and sapiential books, he hardly ever refers to. But for very few quotations, indeed, amazingly few, these books might as well have been totally unknown to him. Within the limited compass of the Pentateuch he had to find everything, in it was contained all wisdom available to man. He clearly had meditated on every word of it with an intensity and perseverance which is only rivalled by the meditations of Christian saints on the words of God-Incarnate recorded in the Gospels. As some items recorded seemed hardly elevating and rather gross and material taken literally, they must be taken mystically and some sublime meaning found in them. In consequence, all the complications and intricacies of patriarchal harems were full of sublime instruction for him. I fancy, however, that the apologetic interest of defending the sacred Law of God from the taunts of the heathen, who were apt to mock at these matrimonial details and other humble narratives in Genesis, must have counted for something.

The cycle of readers kept in view by Philo is hardly ever limited to his own co-religionists. Some writings, no doubt, are more directly propaganda literature, but Philo probably never forgot non-Jews in all he said or wrote. I wonder whether much of Philo's treatises was not first conceived as a homily or sermon and delivered as such in some synagogue in Alexandria, where non-Jews were often present. Such origin of the Philonic treatises would account for their loose and sometimes almost incoherent composition, simply drifting from one subject to the other, only connected by the slender thread of some Bible texts. One never knows what a treatise may contain ; in fact, anything under the sun may be referred to in it.

Though Philo's mind was capable of very sublime and abstract, though often hazy and imaginative thought, he was not averse to finnicky details and even puerilities and trivialities. This is most clearly seen in his predilection for Pythagorean numbers. These stupid inanities may

perhaps annoy us, but we must not be too hard on him. We must not forget that the greatest intellectual genius in Christendom, St. Augustine of Hippo, betrayed the same weakness sometimes. In fact, such playing with numbers was fashionable in the early centuries of our era, being, I suppose, the fruit of a revived interest in Pythagoras, whose playing with numbers five centuries before was the first manifestation of Greek genius for mathematics.

In order to have an idea of Philo's manipulation of numbers, let us read his explanation why on the fourth day of creation God caused the four seasons by the creation of sun, moon and stars.

"The heaven was adorned in the perfect number: FOUR, which number one might without fail designate as the source of perfection, which is the number TEN. For TEN is in actuality what FOUR is in potency. When, namely, we add up the numbers from one to four we obtain ten, which forms in an endless series the recurring terminus, round which the numbers course as round the turning point of a race course. Moreover, the number four embraces the numerical relations of the con-sonants in music, i.e. the fourth, the fifth, the octave and the double octave. The relation of the series of sounds formed by the fourth amounts to $1\frac{1}{3}$; that of those formed by the fifth, $1\frac{1}{2}$; that by the simple octave, 2; by the double, 4. Now, the number four embraces all these: $1\frac{1}{3}$ represents the relation of four to three; $1\frac{1}{2}$, the relation of two to three; and 2 represents two to one, or four to two, and 4, the relation of four to one. We must notice and discuss a further striking meaning of FOUR. First of all it shows the nature of a solid body, whereas the numbers preceding it belong to incorporeal things. In geometry, what is called a point is represented by One; the line is marked by two, because it arises from forward movement of the point, as One by forward movement becomes Two. The line is length without width. Through the addition of width the plain comes into being,

which is marked by the number Three. Now the plain, in order to obtain the nature of a body, needs but one thing more, that is, height or depth. If this One is added to the Three, the Four arises. From this is clear how important is this number, which leads us from the incorporeal and mental object to the concept of a body with triple extension, which is by nature the first thing perceptible by the senses. The person who does not understand the foregoing may grasp it from a well-known game. Nut-players are wont to place three nuts on a surface and then place one nut on top of them, so that they form a pyramid. The triangle, therefore, which is formed on the plain reaches to the number three ; the nut that is placed on top produces what in arithmetic is called four, but in mathematics a pyramid, a solid body. Further, we must not forget that four is the first square number, the product of equal numbers, i.e. the measure of righteousness and equality. Four alone arises both through addition and multiplication of two and two. It therefore shows a beautiful instance of con-sonance, which is unique amongst numbers, but when these equal numbers are multiplied by one another, a new number, the number nine arises. Many other meanings still has the number four, which shall be treated of in a separate essay."

This essay, to which Philo also refers elsewhere, is mercifully lost and thus we are spared more erudite trifling. Though passages full of platitudes and puerilities abound, it would be cruelly unjust to Philo to see in him either a mere legal-minded scrupulous rabbi or a mere retailer of wise old saws.

Philo was a thinker, though not an independent one, and certainly very confused. There is evident truth in the few autobiographical details he gives us.

"There was a time when I devoted myself completely to Philosophy and the study of the Universe and its parts, when I enjoyed the glorious, most desirable and truly

blessed Mind (in a stoic sense) in continuous intercourse with divine thoughts and doctrines, with which I refreshed myself in unquenchable and insatiable desire. In those days no low and common thought arose within me, nor did I wallow in the mire for the sake of glory, riches or carnal joys, but I fancied myself to be always on the wing in heights sublime in ecstacy of soul, and to join in the rhythm of sun and moon and whole firmament and of the Great All. In those days, looking down from the high Ether, and casting the eye of the spirit as from a watch tower down below, I beheld the innumerable image-ideas of all that is in the world and I thought myself blessed to have escaped through the efforts of my powers the fortunes of the lives of men. But then the greatest of all evils, Envy, the foe of the beautiful, espied me. Suddenly he threw himself upon me and did not cease forcibly to tear me hither and thither until he had thrown me down in the broad stream of political cares, in which I am now violently driven along. Groaning under this burden, I am, however, still able to remain upright because from earliest youth I feel rooted within myself a longing for culture. This always kindly has pity on me, cheers me and lifts me up. To this longing I owe it that I often raise my head and gaze upward with the eye of the spirit. True, I do so but dimly, for its keenness is dulled by a cloud of alien occupations, but still at least in some imperfect way I can gaze on the things around me, filled as I am with longing after a pure life, untouched by evil. But when against expectation for a short time rest and quiet from political turmoil is granted me, then I lift myself as on wings above the waves and hover, as it were, in the air, breathed upon by the spirit of knowledge. This spirit often tries to persuade me to flee from my stern masters—I mean not merely human beings, but all sorts of business which pours upon me from all sides—and to spend my time with Him. Indeed, I must thank God withal that the flood which pours in upon me does not totally drag me down into

the depth. Sometimes I lift up the eyes of my soul, which I thought already blinded through abandoning that beautiful hope, and I let myself be shone upon by the light of wisdom. I am not surrendered to darkness for the whole of my life."

Another telling self-revelation is found in this chapter:

"The things of which the soul is in travail by herself are great, though a premature and abortive progeny; but those on which God pours His showers and which He waters are productions in a perfect, entire and most excellent state. I am not ashamed to relate what has happened to myself, which I know from having experienced it ten thousand times. Sometimes when I have desired to come to my usual employment of writing on the doctrines of philosophy, though I have known accurately what it was proper to set down, I have found my mind barren and unproductive, and have been completely unsuccessful in my object, being indignant in my mind at the uncertainty and vanity of its then existing opinions. Then I became filled with amazement at the power of the living God, by whom the womb of the soul is at times opened and at times closed up. Sometimes when I have come to my work empty, I have suddenly become full, ideas being in an invisible manner showered upon me and implanted in me from on high, so that through the influence of divine inspiration I have become greatly excited and have known neither the place in which I was nor those who were present, nor myself nor what I was saying, nor what I was writing. Then I have been conscious of a richness of interpretation, an enjoyment of light, a most penetrating sight, a most manifest energy in all that was to be done, and this had such an effect on my mind as the clearest ocular demonstration would have on my eyes" (*D. Migr. Abrah.* VII).

No one can deny that Philo has now and then passages of great grandeur and beauty.

The Lord is my Shepherd and I shall want for nothing.

"This text is appropriate not merely for every individual person filled with the love of God, but also especially for the whole Universe, for earth, water, air, fire, together with the plants and animals, mortal and celestial beings, which fill them and, moreover, the heavens, the movements of sun and moon, the swaying and harmonious choir of the other heavenly bodies, all these things God leads as a flock, Himself being Shepherd and King, according to right and law, after He has appointed His Right Reason (LOGOS) His first-born Son as leader in order that this Right Reason as an official and representative of the Great King should undertake the care of this sacred flock. For it stands written in one place: Lo, I send my messenger before thy face and he will guard you on the way" (*De Agric*, 51).

"He who has in all sincerity believed in God has by so doing received a disbelief in all other things which are created and perishable, beginning with those things in himself which exalted themselves so highly: namely, his reason and his outward senses. Each of these has a tribunal of its own, the one considers objects appreciable by the intellect only, the end of which is truth, the other the perception of visible things, the end of which is opinion. Opinion anchors upon images and probabilities, and every image is deceitful, exhibiting an attractive similarity in lieu of the original itself. Reason also is convicted of being in error on many points. But the man to whom it has been granted to see and thoroughly examine all corporeal and incorporeal things and to lean upon and found himself on God alone with firm and steadfast reason and sure confidence is truly happy and blessed. After faith the next prize which is offered to the man who requires virtue, is joy. Laughter is an emblem in the body of that unseen joy which exists in the mind. By it the whole soul is in every part entirely filled with cheerfulness, rejoicing in the Father and Creator of all men and things, that is, in God, and rejoicing also in those things which can be done without sin. Next to the man who has acquired self-taught virtue is that meditator on and practiser of virtue who receives as his especial reward the

sight of God. He has found in connection with human life and with the human race a great deal of darkness both by land and sea and in the air and the sky. The whole heaven has presented to him the appearance of night, since what the senses discern is indefinite and the indefinite is akin to darkness. An incorporeal ray of light, purer than the sky, suddenly beamed upon him displaying to him the fact that even that world beyond the material one is guided by a real Governor. This Governor, surrounded on all sides by unalloyed light, was difficult to be understood since the very power of sight was obscured by the brilliancy of His beams. But the sight held out from an immense desire of seeing what was before it. And the Father pitied its desire and eagerness and gave it power and directed a perception of Himself as far, at least, as a created and mortal nature can attain to such a thing.

These men have arrived at the real truth, who form their ideas of God from God, of light from light " (*On Rewards*, par. V seq., abbreviated).

Sometimes, indeed, Philo uses phrases which remind one of St. John of the Cross and St. Theresa, but then again he falls immeasurably below them.

True, Philo was a Jew, and in consequence his conception of God surpassed that of his Pagan contemporaries. Philo's God is an individual personal intelligence distinct from this Universe and infinitely transcending it. God created this world by His free-will, because He is infinitely good. The link between God and man is a moral one. God loves man as a father does ; man is responsible to God as His son. No Pagan contemporary wrote about God as Philo did. There is in his writings something which betrays an influence higher than that of Plato, higher than that of any thinker of Greek and Roman antiquity. On the other hand, Philo was a Hellenist and the spirit of Hellas has lowered and marred his true Jewish attitude towards God. Both Jew and Christian must find in Philo something profoundly disappointing and even disedifying, something which sometimes would almost persuade a casual reader that Philo's

God was not personal at all, that He was but Nature writ large, not, indeed, material, visible nature, but the ideal nature of Plato. Dahne has accused Philo of trying to rob his people of their God. Such accusation would indeed do Philo an injustice, but an injustice which Philo himself has provoked.

The fact is that Philo's God is not the God of revelation, not the God who revealed Himself and spoke to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, Elias or David; it is the God of Philosophy, the God of Nature. In that sense it is true that he has robbed his people of their God. The Torah is a treatise on Psychology. The facts narrated are not history, or if in a measure they are history, their historicity does not matter. It is of no real importance. The Bible is meant to describe the inner life of man's soul, not the external happenings of history. Hence there has been no personal communication between God and man, however personal God in Himself may be. This personal nature of God man knows not because God has on some historical occasion spoken with man, but because man's reason, elevated by God, tells him so. The really supernatural, the really intimate converse of God with man has been eliminated. No immediate knowledge of God is possible, neither in this life nor in the next. Philo repeatedly and emphatically says so. All man can ever do is to increase his realization of God's existence, *that* He is, but in no sense *what* He is. "Wilt thou find the God whom thou seekest? For God has refused Himself to many who sought Him and has left their effort always unsuccessful. But the seeking itself suffices to enrich the soul." "If one is overcome by necessity in this search, I mean by the height of the inaccessible Power, one is worthy not of hatred but of pity."

Philo does indeed sometimes speak as if by inspiration one reached God, but any reader who reads a little further will soon find that Philo explains himself. He never abandons his conviction of the absolute and necessary inaccessibility of God to any created or creatable nature whatsoever. As a Jew he read in his psalter, as we do, *in lumine tuo*

videbimus lumen, but the *lumen* to him is the realization that God is, but in no sense an appreciation what He is, for unto all creation God remains utterly unrevealed and must remain so for all eternity. Philo must have honestly and sincerely prayed to God and in some true way even loved Him, but then it was the Jew who prayed and loved. Philo's philosophy was a hindrance, not a help to him. In his philosophic mood he held a sort of cosmic trance to be his highest aim and a consciousness reaching out to the One of Gnostic speculations to be the great ideal. The struggle between the philosopher and the Jew always continued and this explains the baffling inconsistency of so much Philo says. His co-religionists may be forgiven for passing by their brilliantly gifted fellow Jew and deliberately ignoring all his works, for the tendency of these works was to remove God farther away from the children of men instead of bringing Him closer to them. Philo's works are the utter antitheses of the fact which came to pass in his day, though he knew it not: The Word was God, and the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.

Philo's system has no place for a Redeemer and a Saviour, let alone for a God-made man. He does refer, indeed, in a few places (especially in *De Praemiis passim*) to the coming Messianic bliss, but it is the triumph of the Company of the Wise, the Observers of the Law, which is not only that of Moses, but that of Nature and Right Reason. As Jew he believes in the fulfilment of the prophecy of a coming reign of justice, holiness, plenty and temporal happiness. He even believes that its coming will be sudden and miraculous, that the Jews, God's people, and all wise men, will be gathered from the uttermost ends of the earth, but the Messias counts for little. He makes a passing and almost cryptic reference to him in quoting Balaam's prophecy according to the Septuagint text: (Num. xxiv, 7) "A man shall go forth from his seed and lord it over many nations." The Messias is a hero, who will deliver Israel from his foes, but beyond the rôle of a successful general ushering in the future triumph for the just, the Messias has no further place, function or import-

ance. The Law as the embodiment of right reason is the supreme Saviour, and by conforming to it all men save themselves and are brought to God. In this matter Philo holds the same standpoint as the most rigid Rabbi of Palestine, and it is this which constitutes the chasm between Jewish and Christian thought.

XIII

PHILO'S PHILOSOPHY

Philo's writings, deliberately ignored by his own co-religionists, became highly esteemed amongst Christians, through whose care alone his works have come down to us. Alexandria was for some two hundred years the intellectual centre of Christendom, and Clement of Alexandria, and after him Origen, carried on the allegorical method of explaining Scripture. While Syrian Christianity was never favourable to allegory, the Latin world gave at least some countenance to it, especially through St. Ambrose, who seems to have been well acquainted with Philo. Apart from his treatment of Scripture, Christians found in Philo's philosophical outlook much that pleased them and seemed fit to be adapted to Christian thought and usage. Philo's system postulated some sort of intermediary between God and the world. He found it in his conception of the Logos, or the Word.

Now, the Fourth Gospel contains in its first Chapter these words:

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him and without Him nothing was made. What was made, was life in Him, and the life was the light of men. But the light shineth in darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it. That was the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world and the world was made by Him, but the world knew Him not. He came into His own (people) and even His own (people) received Him not. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us and we saw His glory as of the Only begotten of the Father.

It long appeared to modern scholars that St. John was here completely dependent on Philo, but more recent and more unbiassed studies have made two things clear; first, that the use of the term "the Word of God" as a designation of God Himself was not limited in the Jewish world, to Philo and his school, that in Aramaic "the Memra" or "Word of God" is frequently used of someone in a sense distinct and yet the same with God. A Hebrew is much more likely to have been influenced by the Targumim in his mother tongue than by Hellenistic speculations of Alexandria. Secondly, though St. John and Philo have the term "Logos" in common, the concept underlying the word in St. John is totally different from that in Philo's writings so that any direct dependence is not very likely. The best explanation of the use of the term by St. John is, that St. John utilized a term then on the lips of many, whether in Egypt, Asia, or Palestine, and employed it to express a thought peculiarly and uniquely his own, or rather exclusively proper to the Christian community, of which he was a leader. That this was done under direct divine inspiration and that it expressed a truth divinely revealed we Christians firmly believe, but true historic sense would still force us so to explain the origin of St. John's use of the term in question, whether it be inspired and revealed or not.

Let us study Philo's thought a little. There can hardly be question of a system of philosophy, for nothing can be conceived more unsystematic and even sometimes incoherent and contradictory than Philo's way of writing. Practically all his writings have for direct purpose the explanation of the Mosaic Law, and only indirectly treat of matters philosophical. Philo was indeed a deep thinker, but he was also extremely imaginative and rhetorical; precision and consistency of thought were not his strong point. He tries to gather the good points of the three systems of Pythagoras, of Plato and of Zeno, in other words, he is a Pythagorean, an Academic and a Stoic at the same time. His Pythagorean proclivities are of less importance in our present search; they reveal themselves in his predilection for number specu-

lations and his occasional reference to God as the One and to this world as the Duality arising from the One.

More to the point are his Stoic and Platonic ideas.

Philo borrows from Stoicism, not indeed materialism and Pantheism, not strange fancies of world-cycles and the periodical destruction of the world by fire, but rather psychology and ethics. Philo's wise man is very much like the Stoic saint. Philo's " virtue," very much like the Stoic ideal : to live according to nature : hence Philo's perpetual attempt to show that all Mosaic laws are " natural " laws, the perfect Jew is the perfectly natural man. Philo's wise and virtuous man constitutes a sort of absolute perfection, a man is either virtuous, i.e. lives in complete harmony with nature, or he is not virtuous, and then he is a bad, a wicked man. Of the striving after an ideal and yet a perpetual falling short of it, a struggling, and stumbling and falling and yet again rising, of that Philo says nothing or almost nothing. The strict Stoic of Philo's day would fiercely maintain that virtue had no degrees ; it was something absolute ; it either was or it was not. Philo would no doubt not go as far to defend this as a thesis, but he seems continually to presuppose it. In a hundred places the contrast between the virtuous and the non-virtuous man is drawn ; there hardly ever is any question of gradation. Philo's wise man also seems to achieve his own perfection by his own exertions, his own deeds. Not, indeed, that Philo denies the influence of divine help, but he does not emphasize it. Had Philo lived three hundred years later, he would have been an ultra-Pelagian.

Philo would not say with Seneca that the wise man is in no way inferior to Zeus ; in fact he is in a way superior to him. No, Philo is a convinced Theist, and a devout worshipper of the one true God. Seneca's words would have seemed blasphemy to him. Yet Philo's wise man gained his status by his own good works. A repentant humble sinner, dependent on God's grace for all things, does not fit in well with Philo's predominant thoughts.

Moreover, Philo overstressed God's transcendence. God, according to him, is so utterly beyond all human endeavour

that he makes man's perfections in this life and man's reward hereafter consist in a full comprehension of and conformity to nature. It is true he understands by nature, not merely this physical, material world, but also the ideal world according to Platonic theories. Still, it remains Nature, not God—Nature as a manifestation of the divine, not the Personal God Himself. Philo never fully grasped God's promise to Abraham: "I am thy reward exceeding great."

So likewise Philo in his conception of the Logos or Word hovers between two, or rather three, concepts, the Stoic "Reason," the Platonic "Ideal" and the Jewish "Memra," or Utterance of God.

Ever since the days of Heraclitus c. 513 B.C. this term played a great rôle in Hellenic thought, and it specially influenced the Stoics, who arose two hundred years afterwards. Logos meant for them the Universal Reason as a quality of all that is. They held all that is to be matter or body, and this All-Body is endowed with reason. Reason is nothing immaterial, spiritual nor distinct from matter: it is itself matter under a certain aspect. However refined the matter may be, it remains essentially matter and nothing else. Divine Reason is finest and most resplendent Ether. God is the All-Body in which this ether is infused, or, rather, which possesses this ether as one of its properties. Now, this material rationality of the Universe is the Stoic Logos. It is the Mind of the World; of course, it is mind only in the sense in which we speak of the soul of a lower animal; that is, a life-principle capable of purposive actions yet totally immersed in matter, not an independent entity, distinct from its body. This mind or intelligent ether is, however, not equally diffused. It exists in nuclei of greater or lesser intensity. Man partakes of it in the highest degree. Man's reason is part of, or rather identical with, the Universal Reason.

Now, Philo will speak of the Logos in the world almost as a Stoic would speak. Logos meant rationality in the world and man.

In *De Plantatione* Philo asks: "Is there an empty space

around the earth, if so what holds the world up?" He replies: "He who wants to escape this awkward difficulty let him freely own that no matter is strong enough to be able to carry the weight of this Universe, but that the imperishable Logos of the eternal God forms the adamantine and gigantic support of the All. While this Logos from the centre unto the ends and from the outermost points back to the centre extends itself, it completes the triumphant course of Nature, for the Father and Begetter made him the unbreakable bond of all.

"He who tries to flee from God takes refuge in himself. For there are two kinds of mind: the Mind of the All, which is God (*τοῦ τῶν ὅλων νοῦ, ὅς ἐστι Θεός·*) and the mind of the individual (*τοῦ ἰδίου*). Now, one man flees from his own mind to the mind of the All. Another man flees from God and declares not God, but himself to be the cause of all that happens.

"Moses having been taught by divine revelations concerning the most important things of nature, realized full well that in all that exists one thing is the active principle, the other the passive principle; and that the active principle is the Mind of the Great All, the completely pure and undefiled, but that on the contrary the passive principle is in itself and of itself soulless and motionless, but it changed itself into the most perfect work, even this kosmos, after it was moved and formed by the Mind" (*De Opif. mundi* 9). Logically this last passage would mean Pantheism, but then Philo was not logical.

"Even as gold is impenetrable to any arrows, even as gold is unbreakable though beaten to the thinnest sheets, so the Logos extends itself and diffuses itself in all beings, remaining whole and entire in all beings (*πλήρης ὅλος δι' ὅλων*) and binding all other things together in the unity of the same tissue" (*Quis rer. div. her.* 217).

"There was need for the Logos, which of all things is the most solid and firm bond, in order to bind and mix and weave together the parts and the opposites of the Universe and to urge and to force to concord, union and the kiss of peace

those things which by nature were in irreconcilable opposition" (*Quaest. in Exod. ii*, 118).

"Of themselves all things are loose; if they are close, the reason is that they are made compact by the divine Logos, for He is a glue and a bond which fill all with his essence" (*Quis rer. div. haer. M.*1.499).

While the Logos is thus the bond of unity throughout the Universe, it is, at the same time, the principle of individualization for each thing in the Universe. It is the Logos Tomeus, the Divider, the Distinguisher, that which makes each thing precisely what it is and separates it from all other things. As Logos Spermatikos it is the seed of all things. It is in man's mind that which makes him think, in his speech that which makes him talk, in his senses it is the stimulus of all his perceptions, in his body that which gives it shape and movement. In fact, if we may use a technical expression of the scholastics, it is the *causa formalis* as well as the *causa efficiens* of things. But not merely of individual things; it is this same Logos which is the *causa formalis* of the whole Universe. "The most ancient Logos of Him who is (τοῦ Ὄντος) is clothed with this kosmos as with a garment; earth and water, air and fire and what proceeds therefrom are his veil, but the partial soul (ἡ ἐπὶ μέρους ψυχὴ, the individual psyche) is clothed with the body, and the understanding of the wise man is clothed with virtues" (*De Fuga* 110). Surely nothing could be plainer. The Logos manifests itself in the Universe, as the animal soul does in the body, and the rational soul in rational behaviour.

All this is sheer Stoicism. All that exists is matter and force, and these two are one! It would only require due patience to collect from Philo's writings all passages of this kind, and Father Lebreton has already done a large part of the work.* One can forgive Dälme for saying that Philo with the aid of pious words had robbed the Jews of their God. This judgment on Philo would be just if Philo were logical, but he is not.

Philo may be a Stoic, but he is at the same time a Platonist

**Les Origines du dogme de la Trinité*, pp.166-239.

He firmly holds that beyond this world—this visible, physical and sensible world—there is another world. It is a world of ideas, or, if you like, an Ideal World, a Spiritual world, more truly real than this world. This physical world is a replica, a double, a realization in a lower order. The higher order is the order of ideas, the intellectual exemplars of all things that are in this physical Universe. These ideas are subsistent realities, not merely subjective mental reproductions in the human mind. The εἶδος or "idea" of a thing precedes in the logical and the objective order the externalization of the thing in this visible order. The thought or plan of the thing must precede the physical visible existence of the thing. The thought-world which lies at the back of the visible world is in itself an objective, subsistent reality of a higher order than this externalized sensible Universe. This world is a copy, the original is the thought-world.

This Platonic theory is firmly held, and regarded as an axiom by Philo, and it modifies and enriches the Stoic conception of the Logos. The Logos is the Perfect Exemplar in the immaterial order of this Universe. Let us read a few characteristic passages on the Logos in this sense.

"The Father who created the Universe has given to His Archangelic and most ancient Logos the pre-eminent gift of standing on the confines of both and of separating that which had been created from Him who created it. This same Logos is continually a suppliant to the immortal God on behalf of the race of mortals who are exposed to affliction and misery. He is also the ambassador sent by the Ruler of all to the subject race. The Logos rejoices in this gift and exults in it, announces it and boasts of it, saying: "I stood in the midst between the Lord and you (Num. xvi, 40), being neither uncreated as God nor yet created as you, but being in the midst between these two extremities, like a hostage as it were to both parties: a hostage to the Creator as a pledge and a

security that the whole race would never depart and revolt entirely by choosing disorder rather than order; and to the creature to lead it to entertain a confident hope that the merciful God would not overlook His own work" (*Quis haer* 42).

Philo, in commenting on Moses' desire to see God Himself, makes God speak thus:

"The Powers which thou (Moses) wishest to see are utterly invisible, and only spiritual in the same way as I am invisible and spiritual. I call them spiritual, not indeed that they are grasped by the spirit, but because, could they be grasped, it would not be by the senses, but by the most pure spirit. Although they cannot be grasped in their essence, they do nevertheless manifest an imprint and image of their activity. In your world, a stamp or seal on wax or something similar can make a thousand impressions, yet the seals in themselves do not change, but remain as they are. In this way one has to imagine the Powers which surround me to give qualities and forms to things that were without, however, changing or losing anything of their eternal nature. Some amongst you have called them *ideas*, and rightly so, because they cause the specific differences of all beings, ordering them, determining them, informing them; in a word, rendering them better."

In this naïve way Philo makes God endorse the Platonic theory. He calls Philo's ideas "Powers," and, indeed, throughout his writings these "Powers" are not merely exemplary causes, but real forces and efficient causes. Here is another passage which makes it clear what rôle Philo assigns to these "Powers." He is discussing the text in Genesis: "Let us make man after our own image and likeness."

"This indicates a plurality of makers. Here, therefore, the Father is conversing with His own Powers, to whom He has assigned the task of making the mortal part of our soul that they should act in imitation of His own skill while He

(God Himself) was fashioning the rational part within us. He thought it right that the dominant part within the soul should be the work of the Ruler of all things, but that the part which is to be kept in subjection should be made by those in subjection to Him. He did this also for another reason. The soul alone of man was destined to receive the notion of good and evil, and the power to choose either. Therefore, God thought it necessary to assign the origin of evil to other workmen than Himself, but to retain the production of good to Himself alone" (*De Fugit,* xiii).

The one God alone is the sole creator of the real man, who is the purest mind, but a plurality of workmen are the makers of that which is called " man," that is, the being made up of the external senses. Hence *the real man* is spoken of with article : God made *the* man, that is to say, He made his reason destitute of specification, and free from all admixture. But God speaks of *man* (without the article) in general—" Let us make man "—in order to show that He refers to the being compounded of a rational and an irrational nature.

In another passage Philo writes a mystical-allegorical commentary on the six cities of Refuge mentioned in Leviticus. He says that these symbolise six spiritual cities. The first city is the divine Logos, and of these there are five colonies, which are the Powers of God, who utters the Logos, viz., the creative, the kingly, the merciful, the legislative and the corrective Power. These five Powers find their emblems in the Holy of holies. The last two (legislative and corrective) in the two tables of the Law in the Ark ; the third in the covering of the Ark, which is called the Mercy Seat, and the first two in the two winged Cherubim that are placed over the Ark. " But the divine Logos does not receive any visible emblem, inasmuch as it is unlike any sensible thing. It is itself an image of God, the most ancient of all the objects of intelligence in the whole world, and is placed in the closest proximity to the only truly existing God, without any partition or distance, being interposed between God

and the Logos, for it is said : " I will speak unto thee from the Mercy Seat in the midst between the two Cherubim."

Then in a terrible mixture of metaphors Philo continues : " So that the Word (the Logos) is, as it were, the charioteer of the Powers, and He who utters it is the rider, who directs the charioteer how to proceed with a view to the proper guidance of the Universe "(*On Fugitives* xix).

In another passage Philo explains that God with the article (ὁ Θεός) always refers only to the one true God, but that God without the article (Θεός) refers to a lesser being. " What He here (Gen. xxxi, 13) calls God is His most ancient Word. He allows no scruple in the use of words to stand in the way, having only the one aim to convey what he intends (*De Somniis* I).

Here is another characteristic passage of Philo, which brings out clearly what we have to believe of this " sonship " of the Logos :—

> " God is the creator even of time, for He is the father of its father, since the father of Time is the Kosmos (the world). God has manifested the movement of the Kosmos as the source of Time, so that Time stands to God in the relation of grandson. Now this Kosmos is the younger son of God, because it is perceivable by the senses, for to the Elder Son—as being in the realm of mind—He deigned to give the right of the First-born and He decreed that he should remain with Him. This younger son, on the other hand, perceivable by the senses, caused the dawn and rise of Time because he became subject to movement(31-32. *Quod D. sit immut.*).

> " For Wisdom, having received divine seeds, has in fruitful labour given birth to the visible Son, only begotten and beloved : this Kosmos (*De Ebriet*, 30-31).

" How should any good thing be wanting, when the all-accomplishing God is at all times present (to the soul) with His graces, which are His virgin-daughters, which He, the Father, who begot them, always cherishes as virgins, free

from all contact and pollution ? " In speaking of Isaac's name, which means " he laughs," Philo calls laughter the Son of God within His bosom, the immanent Son of God. If, then, Time is God's grandson, and this world His younger son, and His graces are His daughters, and Laughter the Son within His bosom, what value ought we to attach to the statement that the Logos is His Elder Son ? Surely, it is just metaphor and nothing else. Philo, however, deliberately hides from himself the fact that he is only personifying abstractions. He almost succeeds in hiding it from his readers, unless they read him carefully and extensively.

Philo finds it natural that God, indeed, should swear by Himself but that we should never swear by God but by God's Name :

> " Rightly no one swears by Him, because one cannot in any way be precise about His nature ; it is sufficient to be able to swear by His Name, that means by His Interpreter, the Logos. This Logos is the god of us, imperfect beings as we are. The first God is the God of the wise and the perfect. Moses out of awe for the superiority of the Uncreated Being says : ' Thou shalt swear by His Name, not by Himself.' For the future it is sufficient to take as pledge and witness the divine Logos, and let God be unto Himself His own most sure pledge and witness " (*De Leg. all III*).

" In Genesis," says Philo, " we read that ' God made man after the image of God.' Why did He not say, ' after His image ' ? " " Nothing mortal can be likened to the Supreme Being, to the Father of the Universe, but only to the second god, who is His Logos. For the seal of rationality which is stamped on man had necessarily to be engraved by the divine Logos, for the God who is anterior to the Logos exceeds all rational nature. Nothing created can be likened to Him, Who is above the Logos, and Who has a nature pre-eminent and unique.

There are only three passages in all the writings of Philo

in which the Logos is called "god." In all three he is driven to the use of the term "god" by the Scripture text he is interpreting. In each case he attenuates the meaning of the term to the utmost, and in two of the three he directly points out that it is only in an improper sense the word "god" is used, and in one of them he directly called it a καταχρῆσις "an abuse" of the word.

The root error of Philo lies in his faulty conception of creation. He knows, indeed, that God is utterly transcendent, and there is an infinite distance between this Universe and God. He knows that in one sense, and in His innermost being, God is infinitely and eternally removed from all this Universe which is limited and produced.

Philo fully realises and emphasises that the difference between this world and God is not one of degree of perfection, but a difference of kind; that God and created being are completely in different categories, and that even the concept of being must be applied to God in another way than to the creature. All this Philo understood and repeated a thousand times. This conviction had entered into the depth of Philo's soul because he was a Jew, and felt the folly of the polytheism that surrounded him and the degradation of the divine in the popular mind of the bulk of the pagans.

On the other hand, Philo's mind never rose to the pure idea of creation out of nothing—the idea of God as a purely "efficient" cause and of this world as "an effect." God fashioned, formed, shaped this world. He gave it "specific" being, but not being as such. The substratum was always there. God created Order out of Chaos, but whence the Chaos came, and what the source of undifferentiated Matter, Philo never says. He passes over the point in silence, and simply presupposes its existence. God is the Orderer, but not strictly the Creator of the Universe in our Christian sense. According to Philo, God is not the cause of the totality of being, but only the Orderer which places the being in the special sphere and kind of existence which it has. God, therefore, and this world must in some way

form a compound, a mixture of God and of something else which is not God, which is at the opposite poles of God.

Philo struggled and strove to reconcile these two irreconcilable conceptions, but never succeeded. Philo was a Stoic at heart, yet he would not be a Stoic. There was more than matter, for spirit was not material. God, the infinite Intelligence exceeded the bounds of this material Universe and was not totally immersed in it. He had created (or rather "ordered") it by his free will. On the other hand, Philo spends endless ingenuity in trying to show that this world is the best possible world, for God could only do the best possible thing. This world always was, and ever will be as it is now; otherwise, it would be unworthy of God. God is immanent in this world. He is the Mind of the World, and the World is God's Son.

Philo was both a Platonist and a Stoic. Platonism seemed to afford an escape from the dire necessity of directly wedding the Infinite Intelligence with the grossness of matter. There was a thought-world, a world of ideas at the back of this physical world. It was this thought-world which was directly dependent on God, and an emanation of the Divine. This thought-world was the subsistent exemplar, the divine plan of this world. It was placed between God and this world as if it were a screen to prevent direct contact between God, as He is in Himself, with this material Universe. It was not merely an exemplar. It possessed dynamic power and produced this Ordered world. Hence Philo's scheme of divine Powers. Even these individualized divine Powers seemed still too determinate, too specific, too gross, too particularized for Philo to be directly identified with God. The Logos-concept, though Stoic in origin and not Platonic, was welcomed by Philo as a further means of escape. This Logos embodied all the exemplars of all things, all the Powers, but in a higher and more general way. It was Intelligence, Power, Thought and Might. It was the divine Mind in act—divine, and yet not God. It was not identical with God, and yet it was not created; at least, not created in the sense in which the world

is created. It was within God and yet without Him. It was an emanation, and yet the product of His Will. It was God's Son, still it had not the nature of his Father.

In fact, it was a mere personified abstraction. This Phantom-being conjured up by Philo to satisfy the needs of his confused mentality, was dressed up as if it were a real Person, but even Philo himself seems perpetually conscious that it is not real. The Logos of John is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, eternally distinct from the Father and the Holy Ghost, though He is God even as They are. He became flesh and dwelt amongst us, and we have seen His glory as the Only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.

XIV

SENECA

SENECA first saw the light of this world in the same year that Christ was born, but his death occurred thirty-five years after Christ rose from the dead. Like Our Blessed Lord, he was born in the provinces, but at the other end of the Roman world, at Corduba in Spain. Seneca was not born in a stable, but in the easy and affluent circumstances of some dignified mansion of a Roman nobleman of high standing and connections.

While Rome itself became the home of intrigue, corruption, immorality and bloodshed amongst the ruling classes, the provincial towns retained much of the gravity and the simple manners which for many generations were associated with the Roman name. Seneca's father was a barrister and public orator of note. Though he often stayed for long periods in the capital, he spent the greater part of his long life of over ninety years in his provincial home.

He was happily married to a Spanish lady called Helvia, who gave him three sons, of whom Seneca was the second. To this son he owes his fame, for Seneca published his father's works and wrote his life. Seneca's younger brother, Mela, was fond of retirement and domestic bliss. He kept away from politics, but managed to gather a great fortune as procurator in the provinces. He is best known as the father of the poet Lucan, the unfortunate young man, who was driven to commit suicide in the same year as his uncle Seneca, the year before his own father and his other uncle were done to death by Nero.

Seneca's elder brother and special favourite was Gallio, who, though he shared the feeble constitution and perpetual ill-health of Seneca, became a man of great activity and political success. He was pro-consul of Achaia or governor of Greece, as we would say, in A.D. 52, but, suffering from

malaria, he returned to Rome after a year or so. At least, he was in Rome on Oct. 13 A.D. 54, when the Emperor Claudius died. His joke on the occasion of the official deification of the dead emperor has become famous: "They are hoisting him up to heaven by a halter," he is reported to have said. He was made Consul the year after the consulate of his brother. Being consumptive, he had to spend some years in the mild climate of Egypt to heal his wasted lungs, only to fall a victim to Nero's ferocity in A.D. 65.

He was a man of extraordinary charm of character and the darling not only of his brother but of many friends, so much so that when he was publicly accused in the Senate of a share in Piso's conspiracy against Nero, the accuser was shouted down by the members who tried to shield him against Nero's vengeance. He left one daughter, Novatilla, of whom Seneca was excessively fond, since Seneca's own son had died when only a little boy. Seneca's other pet was his other nephew, Lucan, to whom we have already referred. He writes of him: "that delightful baby, in whose presence all sadness goes. No trouble, however great and pressing, can stay, when he is about, he softens it. His boisterousness makes any one dry his tears. His smart prattle would make any one forget his anxieties, his acuteness would make anybody laugh. However immersed in your own thoughts, his babbling makes you attend to him and forget yourself." When this delightful baby had grown to be a man of twenty-five and all the world admired his poetry, he was still talking, and while talking he died. Having opened his veins, he recited poetry about a dying soldier till death silenced his voice. But we are writing not of Seneca's brothers and nephews and nieces, but of Seneca himself.

In the arms of a most affectionate aunt, his mother's sister, Seneca was brought to Rome, and there received his education after the fashion of those days. He had Attalus and Sotion for tutors, and learnt from them that mixture of rhetoric and Stoic philosophy which passed as wisdom in Roman circles. The young man seems to have taken himself

very seriously. For a time he abstained from all wine and fleshmeat as a practice of asceticism, till his practical and homely-minded father persuaded him not to make himself singular. His aunt was a lady of great influence; her husband had been for sixteen years governor of Egypt, perhaps the most responsible office under the emperors. Though of a very retiring disposition, she used her power to obtain a government position for her nephew, and Seneca by becoming a quaestor, obtained a prominent post in the Roman treasury. He seems early to have distinguished himself at the bar, and his eloquence nearly cost him his life.

Caius, the mad emperor, envious of the praise lavished on the young barrister, affected to regard his rhetoric as worthless and incoherent, but planned to put him to death. He was persuaded by one of his mistresses to abandon the thought, as Seneca's ill-health was sure before long to bring about his death and save the emperor the odium of the murder. In A.D. 41, when Claudius succeeded Caius, the Senate banished Seneca to Corsica on the ground of a supposed intrigue of Seneca with Caius' sister Livia. What truth there was in the accusation is difficult to decide. The infamous Messalina seems to have brought about the fall of her hated rival, Julia, and all those in any way connected with Julia had to suffer. The decree of banishment had been issued by the Senate, but it was obvious that it was really the act of Claudius himself. Three years later Seneca made a pitiable attempt to obtain his recall. He wrote a letter replete with fulsome flattery to Polybius, Claudius' private secretary, not only demeaning himself to praise this worthless creature, but extolling Claudius with an insincerity which is sickening. He is also accused of having sung the praises of that monster Messalina herself. None of this helped Seneca in the least, as Claudius left him in Corsica for five years longer, till the influence of Agrippina, the niece and last wife of Claudius secured his return. The eight years in Corsica seem not to have been years of great hardship; at least, Seneca wrote to persuade his mother that he was quite happy.

He was recalled to Rome in A.D. 49 and became the confidential adviser of Agrippina and tutor to Nero, her eleven year old son by her first husband. When five years later Claudius died and Nero succeeded, Seneca was the most prominent personage in Rome. It does not say much for the nobility of Seneca's character that on Claudius' death and official deification he wrote a somewhat scurrilous pamphlet entitled " the pumpkinification of Claudius." In this he makes him out to have been a malignant idiot and ridicules even the good measures of his reign, although he himself some years before had praised him to the skies Nero's predecessors Augustus, Tiberius, Caius and Claudius all had sufficient oratorical gifts to write and deliver their own speeches in Parliament, but Nero was singularly deficient in that way. All his public utterances were really composed by Seneca, who must, therefore, share the responsibility of the good and the evil in them. Burrus, the Prefect of the Prætorians, and Seneca were for five years the undisputed masters of the situation in the Capital. They were the power behind the throne, and with Agrippina, the emperor's mother, the real rulers of the Roman world. These five years have become proverbial for mild and just government. If there is truth in the tale that when Nero was called upon to sign his first death sentence he wished that he had never learnt to write, some of the praise must go to Seneca, whose pupil he was. That Burrus and Seneca did their utmost to restrain Nero's bestial ferocity cannot be doubted, yet Seneca was neither a saint nor a hero.

He amassed a huge fortune. In less than four years of imperial favour he gathered a fortune of three million pounds, a fabulous sum for those days. His enemies accused him of lying in wait for childless old people to secure their wills in his favour, and of impoverishing Italy and the provinces by his usury. The revolt of England against Roman rule under Boadicea was partially due to the exasperation of the British chiefs, to whom Seneca had lent a huge sum of money. This he suddenly demanded back, and for its recovery he imposed an intolerable tax on Britain. It

would be unjust, however, to make Seneca responsible for all the rapacity and brutality of the Romans in Norfolk, for when Boadicea's husband died in A.D. 61, Seneca had ceased to be a power in Rome. The luxury of Seneca's palace became the talk of the city. He was said to possess some five hundred tables of cedarwood, all alike, three legged and with feet wrought in ivory. At these he made his friends recline when invited to his banquets. One can pardon Suillius, the barrister, who was condemned in Seneca's time for having made too much money by his practice, that he compared his honest gain with the gigantic wealth of Seneca. Tacitus gives us Seneca's speech when he offered to refund all his riches into the imperial exchequer. It possesses a certain grandeur in its simplicity. Seneca's admirers would see in it a great act of renunciation ; Seneca's foes would call it an act of shrewd foresight or timid precaution to avert the envy of Nero, for Nero's envy meant death.

Perhaps the greatest blot on Seneca's character is his connivance at the murder by Nero of his own mother, Agrippina. Nero's first attempt at murdering his mother had failed. He had used an ingenious contrivance on the State barge which conveyed his mother across the lake after banqueting with him. This contrivance had indeed thrown her into the water, but as she was an able swimmer, she was not drowned, and safely reached the shore, though they had tried to hit her with their oars and actually killed her companion in the water. On reaching home, she dispatched a messenger to her son that she was safe. Nero was in fury at the failure of his plan and did not know what to do. He called Burrus and Seneca and asked their advice. Should he send some of the guards to put her to death ? Seneca said that none of the soldiers would kill the daughter of their favoured general Germanicus. Burrus said that Anicetus, an assassin in imperial pay, could see to it. Seneca remained dumb, and the assassin did his work. Nero sent a letter to the Senate to exculpate himself, pretending that Agrippina had been caught in a conspiracy against himself

and on being discovered had committed suicide. Seneca wrote Nero's letters.

People excused Seneca on the plea that any opposition to Nero would in any case have been fruitless. Perhaps so, or rather, possibly so, but this does not justify Seneca's abject surrender and complicity in covering up the crime. Though perhaps there was no one in the Senate such a fool as to believe Nero's statement, yet they, Seneca included, publicly professed to be overjoyed that Nero had escaped so serious a menace to his life.

For the last years of his life, when Burrus was dead and Nero under the influence of the fiend Tigellinus and the lascivious Poppaea, Seneca tried to avert the coming doom by complete retirement into private life pleading his advanced age and increasing infirmities. But for the Damocles' sword of his almost inevitable condemnation, these last years seem to have been a time of simple domestic felicity. He had taken a wealthy and noble young lady in second marriage, who filled the position of old man's darling admirably well. They seem to have been very fond of one another. The long series of letters to his friend Lucilius give us an insight into his state of mind. They make the most charming reading of all his works, though marred by the constant recurring praise of suicide. This praise was an obvious disguise for his fear of death. Haunted by this fear he tries to steel himself against the fateful hour. It was tragic enough when it came. He was accused of complicity in the Piso's conspiracy against Nero. Whether he took part in it is difficult to say; one almost hopes he did. An attempt to rid the earth of the imperial monster would have been a title to praise. Nero, glad of the chance of getting rid of Seneca by the sword rather than by poison as he did Burrus, fastened on an expression which Seneca was supposed to have used about Piso, and sent an emissary to ask what he meant by it. Seneca sent Nero a straight answer that he was not likely to have said the supposed flattering words about Piso. "He was not given to flattery; of all people Nero should know this best, as he had

had more of Seneca's outspokeness than of his servility." When this answer came back, Nero, Tigellinus and Poppaea were in conclave together. They asked the tribune who brought the message whether Seneca looked as if preparing for death. The tribune said that neither his words nor his looks seemed to suggest this. "Go back and tell him he must die," was the command. The tribune must have been somewhat staggered by the command. He went to ask the prefect whether he should carry it out. The prefect, "with fatal cowardice," says Tacitus, told him to do it. No one dared raise his voice to arrest the crime, and no one had the courage to go and tell the old man.

They finally found a centurion to take him the news. Seneca asked for material to write his last will. The centurion refused it. He turned to his friends, saying, "I can only leave you the best thing of all, the model of my life; if you remember that, you will be famous for fine literature and stable friendship." He almost sternly forbade any lamentations in these words: "Where are your precepts of wisdom? Where your reason for years prepared against this fatality? Were any of you ignorant of Nero's cruelty? Having killed his mother and his brother, what else could he do than kill his trainer and teacher?" Embracing his wife, Seneca felt somewhat overcome and besought her not to mourn for him for ever, but let the remembrance of his virtuous life sustain her. But Pompeia Paulina wished to die with her husband. Seneca fearing he would leave his wife only to a life of injury and insult, lovingly and proudly consented, and told her her end was even more glorious than his. They cut the veins in their arms at the same time. But as Seneca's blood flowed but slowly, he had his veins cut also above and below the knee. As he was in great pain, he persuaded his wife to retire to another room lest the mutual sight of their pain should increase their sufferings. He then dictated his last words to some bystanders, who took them down. In Tacitus' day these words of Seneca were too well known to need recording, but we do not know them. Seneca took long in dying. His physician

and friend administered a strong poison to him at his own request, but it would not work. Seneca then entered a hot bath, first sprinkling his slaves with water, as a libation to Jupiter Liberator. When this also failed, he entered a vapour bath, by the steam of which he was suffocated.

Thus ended the man who was esteemed as the greatest exemplar of pagan virtue in the days of Christ.

Did Seneca know about the Christians? Indeed he did. His own brother Gallio heard St. Paul at Corinth. The name of Christians was on everybody's lips in Rome the year before Seneca died. On the 18th of July, A.D. 64 Rome was set on fire, and the greater part of the vast city burnt down. The populace loudly said that Nero had turned incendiary. Nero, to avert the public odium of the deed from himself, cast the blame on the Christians and subjected them to the most far-sought punishments. Perhaps Seneca thought of the Christians as Tacitus did, who reports :—

> "The mob called Christians, a set of people odious by their crimes. The founder of the sect was Christus, who in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death by the Procurator Pontius Pilate. The pernicious superstition was suppressed for the time being, but had broken out again not only throughout Judea, where the evil started, but even in the city of Rome, where all atrocious and shameful things come together and find worshippers. Hence, first those who acknowledged [themselves Christians] were punished, and afterwards by their means a vast multitude was condemned, not so much for the crime of incendiarism as for hatred of humanity. Mockery was added to the death penalty, so that they were covered with skins of wild beasts and thus torn to death by dogs; many were crucified or burnt; others, when evening came, were burnt to death as torches."

The two brothers Seneca and Gallio had probably the same disdain for what at first they must have regarded as quarrels amongst Jews. St. Luke in the Acts thus describes the incident at Corinth.

"When Gallio was pro-consul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, saying: this man persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law."

The Jews enjoyed throughout the Roman Empire the privileges of "a tolerated religion." No one was allowed to interfere with their sacred rites. This the Corinthian Jews attempted to construe into an obligation for every Jew to live according to the Mosaic law; if he contravened the Mosaic Law he ceased to enjoy the privileges of a *religio licita*. "But when Paul was beginning to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews: 'If it were a question of some injustice or some wicked villainy, reason would that I should have borne with you, but if they are questions about words and names and of your law, look to it yourselves; I will not be judge of such things,' and he drove them from the judgment seat." While the lictors and officials who surrounded the public tribunal of Gallio were carrying out the magistrate's orders, the Gentile crowd, nothing loath to do a little Jew-baiting, so eagerly assisted in the dispersal of the Jews that they used the opportunity to get hold of the ruler of the synagogue and give him a beating. This was done within sight of the court, but Gallio cared not for whatever they did.

I dare say the Jewish crowd thought that the new pro-consul could be hustled into using the Roman law for protecting some particular view of the Mosaic Law. But Gallio was shrewd enough not to touch the matter at all. He had come from Rome, whence Claudius the emperor had driven out the Jews, because they were for ever raising riots on account of this Christ. He was therefore on his guard not to put his foot into this hornet's nest.

Twelve years later it had dawned upon the authorities in Rome that the Christians were after all not merely a peculiar kind of Jews, although the common people did perhaps only see in them a worse form of Judaism. It is perhaps surprising that the Christians within twenty years of their arrival in Rome should have become so notorious

and so detested by the populace that the accusation of their having set fire to Rome should have been considered by Nero as likely to find credence. The explanation lies no doubt in these facts. First, in the hatred of the Jews, whose influence was extraordinarily great. Poppæa, Nero's wife, was, according to Josephus, "a religious woman," i.e. she was inclined to Judaism and perhaps a proselyte. She obtained favours for the Jews of Jerusalem even against the wish of Festus the procurator and Agrippa, junior. Josephus himself was introduced to Poppæa through the good offices of Aliturius, one of Nero's favourite actors, and he boasts of having received many presents from her and through her intervention to have obtained the release of some Jewish priests unjustly imprisoned. Some years before, Agrippina, at the prayers of Agrippa, junior, had obtained from the Emperor Claudius a verdict against the Samaritans and in favour of the Jews, a verdict which involved the banishment of the Roman procurator and the public execution of a Roman tribune in the streets of Jerusalem. On the other hand, the Greek citizens of Caesarea in Palestine succeeded in bribing Burrus, Seneca's fellow minister, to make Nero withdraw citizen rights from the Jews in Caesarea. In any case, Jewish interests were well represented in the imperial household. That the Neronian legislation (*institutum Neronianum*) forbidding the existence of Christians was obtained by Jewish influence is not at all unlikely. The suggestion occurs already in the early poet Commodian, who seems well informed about Jewish affairs.

The second fact is no doubt the apparent mysteriousness and aloofness of the Christian faith. There were pagan cults enough in Rome, but they displayed their rites openly, and the pagans readily understood them. The Jews also, though detested, were still in a measure understood; they had an ancient temple and ancient customs, and besides they had for many generations lived amongst their heathen neighbours. The Christians were a cryptic sect, addicted to an unintelligible superstition which centred round a

crucified Jew. They were fiercely hated by their own countrymen, and seemed to cause friction and uproar wherever they found entrance. From their meetings all non-Christians were rigorously excluded. What wonder that an unlettered ignorant crowd should believe any evil of them, if it were cleverly insinuated.

That Seneca must have known about the Christians is obvious. St. Paul had appealed to Caesar, and had arrived in Rome in A.D. 61, when Seneca was still in power. Felix had tried his case, and Pallas, Nero's closest boon companion, was Felix brother.

We learn from St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, which he wrote from Rome, that he was lodged in the Praetorium, that is, the barracks attached to Caesar's palace, and that St. Paul's preaching had created some impression in Caesar's household. It is altogether unreasonable to suppose that Seneca, who even after Burrus' death, in A.D. 62, still remained in contact with Nero's entourage, would not have heard of the teacher from Tarsus, who so vigorously defended the doctrines of that sect, which two years later was credited with the fire of Rome. A recent scholar has in fact suggested that St. Luke wrote his Gospel and the Acts as a document to be used in the trial of St. Paul—an explanatory treatise setting forth the origin and spread of the Christian Church which was then about thirty years old. There are two editions of the Acts; the first would, according to this theory, be the copy handed to Seneca; the second, the copy later in use in the Christian community. The theory is ingenious, but beyond its ingenuity there is nothing to recommend it. It may have been so, but there is no real proof of it. Christian legend has embroidered the facts and imagined a correspondence between St. Paul and Seneca, but these letters are obviously not genuine.

Seneca was an able and voluminous writer. His *Tragedies* are in England often regarded as tedious bombast, though they have received, and do still receive, a more favourable judgment in France. It is true the old mythological themes and the display he makes of mythological lore are apt to

leave us cold; the more so as we know that Seneca did not believe a single word of the myths of the Greek and Roman gods. However, Seneca was a brilliant user of epigrams, and even in his tragedies there is many a telling and memorable saying. Seneca's works on natural science are obviously valueless to us to-day, but he was a great writer on moral subjects. In treating of these he displays keen insight, a good knowledge of the human heart, and many lofty sentiments. Those who forget his rather weak and tainted life and only consider his writings can be forgiven if they see in him a sort of Pagan saint. The man had undoubtedly strong, clear and genuine aspirations for good. In conduct he was not a hero. We need not believe the accusations against him about adultery with Julia, about sin with Agrippina, about unnatural vice, about unscrupulous avarice. We may make concessions for his exceptionally difficult position as guardian and mentor of Nero; but no true estimate of his character can escape the acknowledgment that he was a weak character who loved the good things of this world, and was so afraid to lose them that he would stoop very low to obtain and retain them.

No doubt he was better than most of his contemporaries, but the lowliest of those living human torches in the garden of Nero, those followers of Jesus of Nazareth who were sewn in sacks filled with pitch and resin and set on fire to grace a Roman holiday, were greater than he. That he ever saw them, I doubt. By that time he had already withdrawn into deepest retirement, and he is not likely to have come from his country residence to see Nero's ghastly show. His death, when it came the following year, well exemplified the contrast between the old Pagan world and the new divine revelation that had come upon this earth.

Seneca was an enthusiastic Stoic, a prophet of Stoicism.

> "Whatsoever the constitution of the Universe obliged us to suffer, let us accept it with all our heart. To this sacred thing are we bound, that we should bear mortal things and not be disturbed by things to avoid which is not within our power. We are born under a monarchy:

to obey God is liberty. Therefore true happiness lies in virtue. And what does this virtue persuade you to? Not to regard anything good or evil except what is the outcome of virtue or vice. And then to remain unshaken in the face of evil or in consequence of well-being. Thus, as far as it is right, thou formest thyself into a god. What does virtue promise thee for such an enterprise? Great things; equal to those of the gods. Never any constraint, never any need! Thou wilt be free, safe, beyond harm. No idle attempts, no obstacles; all will happen according to wish; nothing against it, nothing against thy expectation and will. Is then virtue quite sufficient for a happy life? As virtue is perfect and divine, how could it not be sufficient—nay, more than sufficient? For what could be lacking to a man who is beyond all desire? What external thing does he need who has gathered within himself all that is his?"

Bold, brave words, and yet so idle and so sad on the lips of a Stoic! For a Stoic thinks this Universe God. All (there is) is force and matter. The sum of all force and matter is this Universe, and this Universe is God. Man is but part of this Universe; therefore let him willingly conform himself to the Great All. Resistance is useless; resistance brings sorrow. The highest wisdom is willing comformity to nature, for nature will have its way with or without man's consent.

Of a personal God, a loving God, a God distinct from this world, a God whom man one day will see and possess and love, there is in Seneca nothing. The humility which Seneca advocates toward "the Great All" is only a mock humility, for it is no humility toward a Maker and Creator distinct from himself. Seneca is himself part of that All and in conforming to the Whole he only conforms to his own reason.

Poor Seneca, did your heart, perhaps, feel more than your lips did say? And though your system allowed you no personal God, did you in the innermost recess of your soul offer half-conscious worship to the God who made you? Only the last judgment can give the answer.

XV

EPICTETUS

While the twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ were evangelizing the world, paganism also had its teachers. Fashionable folk affected to frequent lectures on religious and philosophical matters. Many lecturers made propaganda for the newest developments in religious philosophy. Such philosophy replaced the simpler and more inarticulate faith of primitive days. The pagan priests of Greece and Rome were indeed ministers of the cult of their gods, but they were not teachers of the people. Whatever teaching of religion took place was given by "philosophers," who professed to discuss the problems of the origin of this world and the purpose of human life. Among such preachers and moralists of the first century there is a remarkable figure, whose words have the ring of sincerity and whose life was not unworthy of the doctrine he taught. We refer to Epictetus of Hierapolis. He is the first pagan who ever mentioned the Christians—Galileans he calls them—and he even seems to betray acquaintance with the New Testament.

Epictetus was born about the time that St. Paul visited Ephesus, and he was born some sixty miles from that famous city, in Hierapolis in Phrygia. In the city of his birth he may well have heard of St. Philip and his three daughters who were spreading the Gospel there, when he was a boy. There is nothing unlikely in his having met either St. John or St. Philip or St. Paul in his native land. He must have been a young man of almost twenty when St. Peter and St. Paul were martyred in Rome.

He was born a slave, "from a slave-mother," says an

inscription in his honour in Asia Minor, but we know nothing of his early years. In his writings he makes nowhere a reference to Asia, and he certainly was in Rome as a young man; hence, it is not unlikely that he left his native country as a boy. Our young Phrygian slave somehow got into the possession of the notorious Epaphroditus, the chief of the bodyguard of Nero. The name of this Epaphroditus is mainly remembered by the gruesome details of Nero's death. When that Emperor heard the horsemen approaching who were to drag him to judgment, he attempted suicide, but would never have summoned courage to plunge the dagger deep enough into his body had he not been assisted by Epaphroditus. Some twenty years later another Emperor, Domitian, from a morose dread of assassination, had the unfortunate Epaphroditus executed for his share in Nero's death. Epictetus's master seems to have been hard on his slave. Musonius, who became Epictetus's instructor, sometimes tried to frighten the young man with the anticipation of what his owner might inflict on him, but the slave-student seemed imperturbable, and replied that nothing could happen to him beyond what can befall a man.

There is a very ancient story that his cruel master once tortured him so that his leg was nearly breaking. Epictetus said calmly: "You'll see, you'll break my leg!" And when it was broken, he quietly added: "There now, I told you so!" This story, however widespread, is probably only a legend. Celsus first mentions it more than a century later. He prefers the heroism of Epictetus to the meekness of the sufferings of Christ. Epictetus was certainly lame and disfigured, but the best authorities ascribe his lameness to rheumatism, and say he had it from youth. However this may be, the story shows the reputation for self-possession which Epictetus enjoyed in antiquity.

He several times refers to his former master, but in good-natured banter. He tells, for instance, how Epaphroditus had a slave shoemaker, called Felicion. He sold him because he found him utterly useless. It chanced that this slave was bought by one of Cæsar's household, and thus became

"Imperial Shoemaker." Epaphroditus suddenly changed his attitude towards his former worthless slave, and whenever possible enquired after him: "How is my dear Felicion? I *did* like that man!" When he had met him, he made it his business to refer to it: "I have just spoken to Felicion; now I call him a man of common sense!" This anxiety to be on good terms with his quondam slave became so marked that it was a standing joke among the servants. "Where is Epaphroditus?" asked one. "Why, man, in consultation with Felicion, of course," answered another.

This Felicion became the pet aversion even of the meek and gentle Epictetus. "I would not care to live if I had to owe my life to Felicion and had to bear his vulgarity and insolence. I have experienced what a slave can be, when he thinks that he has come into a bit of good fortune and when he is blind to everything else."

Epictetus tells another story of Epaphroditus. Someone came to his master in fearful distress—in fact, clasped his feet in abject misery and confided to him the awful secret that he was a ruined man—he had only a million and a half sesterces left. This would be in purchasing value something like eighty thousand pounds to-day. Did Epaphroditus laugh in the man's face? Not he. He said with tender concern: "Poor dear; how have you been able to keep that quiet? How have you been able to bear up under it?" Beyond such harmless anecdotes, however, Epictetus says nothing against his former master. This is no doubt in part due to Epictetus's great charitableness. Speaking evil of your neighbour was one of the worst sins in his eyes. On the other hand, one gets the impression that Epaphroditus cannot have been a monster of cruelty. In any case, he gave his young slave a liberal education. Amongst other things he sent him to attend the lectures of Musonius Rufus. This Musonius, or Rufus, as Epictetus always calls him, was a most estimable and upright character, the best product of the paganism of the time. The dominant philosophy of the day was Stoicism, which had found in Seneca its ablest exponent, but not its noblest defender.

However stately and epigrammatic Seneca's words, Seneca's deeds were but a poor illustration of his teaching. Seneca may have met St. Paul; he certainly did not imitate him. St. Luke may have written his Gospel and Acts for Seneca's perusal, as some say; but Seneca's words and deeds do not betray their influence.

Musonius was a better man. He was a Roman knight, who devoted his life to raising the moral tone of Rome. He tried to make his school less of a hall for the display of rhetoric and more of a home of virtue, where the young were trained for a solid and respectable life. Idealistic pantheism, the deification of human reason, the duty of stolid indifference to pain and misfortune may be feeble inducements to a life of self-restraint and morality, but Musonius at least honestly tried to apply his principles. Two years before the martyrdom of St. Paul, Musonius was banished by Nero, and he bore his exile with noble fortitude.

Whether Epictetus in Musonius' classrooms ever met his somewhat older fellow-student Titus, the future Emperor, is likely, but not quite certain. It is certainly to Musonius' credit that he had two such remarkable disciples as our Phrygian slave and Titus the "deliciæ generis humani."

Epictetus seems to have been used by Epaphroditus as his secretary. In later days he told his students good-humouredly that on awakening too early in the morning he used to worry about reading his letters, but he used soon to compose himself to sleep again, saying to himself: "What does it matter how anybody reads letters? my present job is to enjoy my sleep." His employer must have been a hot-tempered individual, and sometimes have given his secretary a hard time of it. Epictetus in his lectures very often and very feelingly blames, as unworthy of a man, loss of temper and blind anger with slave folk for trivial offences. He vividly describes a man's bad humour at breakfast and the discomfort of the household in consequence. One cannot help thinking that during his slave-life he must have suffered acutely because of this.

We do not know the reason why his master freed him. It was not unfashionable for the rich to grant liberty to some gifted slave and thus to change a slave into a client. As client a man could often be of more service to his former master than as slave. The power which freedmen exercised in Rome at the time is astonishing. It is, of course, possible that Epictetus bought his freedom by saving up his peculium, but I should think this extremely unlikely, judging from Epictetus's principles. He seems to have thought nothing of his freedom. When some people told him it was a grand thing, he shrugged his shoulders and said it meant only some twisting and turning before a prætor. From another reference it appears that the five per cent. of his assessed value, which had to be paid on his being freed, stuck in his memory.

On being freed, Epictetus tried outdoor speaking in the streets of Rome as an apostle for his principles of Stoicism, but the results were not very satisfactory. The little lame man had no very striking appearance, and the rough crowd was too much for him. Another apostle, Saul of Tarsus by name, had to admit that "his appearance was contemptible," and, in consequence, he was often stoned and beaten with rods and left as dead by the roadside. But his courage never failed. Epictetus had not received the spirit of Pentecost: we must forgive him if he retired to the lecture-room. For some years he thus taught in Rome, and when the Emperor Domitian banished all "philosophers"—we would call them "public lecturers and evangelists"—from Rome, Epictetus also left, and seems never to have returned. He settled at Nicopolis, a town near what is now the southern frontier of Albania, but then an important centre of international traffic. His classrooms apparently continued to be well frequented, though the place was not very attractive to the gilded youth from the great cities. Epictetus pictures them as bitterly complaining of the discomforts of the place, and especially of "the abominable baths."

At Nicopolis he became quite a celebrity. He himself

describes travellers saying on arrival at Nicopolis by boat: "We have to land here, and before we book our further passage we might go and see Epictetus. Let us see what he'll say!" But on leaving, he pictures them saying: "That Epictetus is a nobody; he speaks in solecisms and barbarisms."

For all that he was admired by many. His introductions and letters of recommendation to the great were eagerly sought. Important people became his disciples.

He apparently lived in perfect simplicity. He was never married. He thought marriage would interfere with his vocation as messenger from God and overseer of men. He lived to a great old age, but how and when precisely he died we do not know. He left us no writings by his own hand, but his greatest disciple, Arrian, published eight books of discourses—I would almost have said sermons—of Epictetus, and a manual containing the epitome of his teaching. This manual and four of the eight books of sermons are still extant; they are the main source of information about this remarkable man. Besides these there is but a small collection of fragments, in which some of his most telling sayings are preserved.

On the theoretical and philosophical side Epictetus presents nothing original. He is a Stoic. He takes Stoic philosophy for granted and never departs from it. But his tone and temper are new, astonishingly so. There is a warmth and a tenderness, a piety and a humility, a cheerfulness and a grateful spirit, a love for purity and a delicacy of conscience in Epictetus, a fervour and a zeal which is utterly un-Stoic. Seneca before him and Marcus Aurelius after him are different. There is a haughtiness and a hardness, a sadness and a despondency in them which is strangely absent from Epictetus. It is true that Marcus Aurelius also, at the moment of death, gives "sincere and true and heartfelt thanks," but it is to *the gods*, not to God. The Emperor is a devout worshipper of the immortal gods; in Epictetus the Greco-Roman pantheon is almost forgotten. The Emperor does, indeed, proclaim the unity of

the godhead in some sense; he sometimes betrays what is called a cosmic consciousness, a trance-like identification of himself with the All; but the ring of almost personal affection for God is lacking, at least, in comparison with the intensity and strength of it in Epictetus. The homely sentences of Epictetus are more human than the stately style of the Roman Cæsar.

Let us read some of Epictetus's sayings.

He is discussing in what occupation he would like death to find him. He confesses that he would like to be overtaken in some deed of beneficence, public utility, or magnanimity; but if that be not possible, then at least while busy with the improvement of his own soul, in perfect calm and in the wish to give everyone his due. "If death overtakes me in this state, it will be quite enough for me if I can stretch out my hands to God and say: 'Whatever faculties I received from Thee to understand Thy governance and to obey it, those I have not neglected. As far as in me lay, I have not dishonoured Thee. Look how I have used my senses and my thoughts. Have I ever murmured against Thee? Have I ever been displeased with what happened to me? or wished it otherwise? or gone beyond my station? Because Thou hast given me birth, I am grateful for what Thou hast given me. I am well content with as much of what was Thine as I have had for my use. Receive it back again and place it wherever Thou wilt, for Thine are all things, and Thou gavest them to me.' Should a man in this state not be well content to leave this world? What ending could be happier?" (Book IV).

In another place he describes the happy deathbed which he hopes to have, in a similar way, and speaks to God: "Have I murmured against Thy governance? I have fallen sick, because Thou didst will it; others have been sick, but I have been so willingly. I have become poor at Thy will, but I have been so cheerfully. I have held no public office because Thou didst not will it. I have never sought for pride of place. But hast Thou ever seen me

sad on that account? Have I come before Thee with a face that was not bright? I was ready for anything Thou shouldst command or signify as Thy pleasure, and now willest Thou that I should depart from the festal crowd? I depart, and I am deeply grateful to Thee that Thou hast deigned to allow me to keep the feast with Thee, to see Thy works and to follow Thee in my mind in the governance thereof. May death take me while I am thinking, or writing, or reading such truths."

The sincerity of these and many other passages is beyond question. He often stresses the omnipresence of God. "Zeus has given to everyone a custodian, everyone's guardian spirit, and he has delivered him to him to guard, and he never sleeps and is never deceived. To what better guardian, what more careful keeper could he have entrusted him? So then, when ye have closed the door and thus brought darkness within, remember never to say that ye are alone, for ye are not, for God is within and your guardian spirit, and what need have these of light to see what ye do" (Book I, 14). "Thou carriest God within thee, and dost thou not realize that thou pollutest him with impure thoughts and sordid actions? In the presence of an image of God thou wouldst not dare to do what thou dost, but when God is present within, seeing all things and hearing all things, thou art not ashamed to do such things, unaware of thy own nature and obnoxious to God" (Book II, 8).

"What speech sufficeth to praise and celebrate [God's] Providence towards us? If we had sense, what else would we do by ourselves and in public but to sing hymns unto the Divine, to praise and to give thanks? Ought we not, while digging or ploughing or while at meals, sing our hymn to God? Great is God who gave us our bodily organs by which we can work the soil; great is God who gave us hands, a mouth and a stomach, who made us such that we grow imperceptibly, and that we breathe even when we are asleep. For such things should we sing a continuous hymn; but we should sing a most grand and divine hymn because He has given us the power to understand

these things and to use them in our own way. And surely, as the bulk of you men are too blinded to do this, there must be at least some one person who carries out this duty and who in the name of all sends up a hymn to God! For what else can I do, I, a lame old man, except sing my hymn to God? Were I a nightingale I would sing as a nightingale, or if a swan as a swan; but now that I am a rational creature I must sing my hymn to God: that is *my* work, and I do it. I will not leave my post as long as it is given me, and I exhort you people to sing the same song" (Book I, 16).

Nothing, surely, more admirable than such attitude towards God, even in a heathen. If his self-righteousness sometimes grates upon us, we must remember that he had also his humbler moods. "What then, is it possible to be already sinless? No, it is not, but this at least is possible: incessantly to try to live without sin. Even this is dearly to be desired if we, never growing slack in that endeavour, be free at least from some sins" (Book IV, 12).

Towards his fellow men Epictetus taught patience and forbearance. One passage must suffice:—

"So and so has insulted you! I am grateful to him that he did not strike me.—But he *did* strike you! I am grateful that he did not wound me.—But he *did* wound you! I am grateful that he did not kill me. For when or from whom did he ever learn that man is meant to be a meek and sociable animal, and that an act of injustice causes a great injury to him who commits it? Now, as he never learnt this and does not believe it, why should he not follow what seems good in his eyes? A neighbour has thrown stones! Well, is it you who have done wrong?—Oh, but he broke some vases! Are you then a vase? If not, what has he done against you? Are you to be a wolf to bite back, or shall you throw more stones than he? He has done it against *you*, who are *a man*. Well, look in your treasury; what faculties have you got? Those of a wild beast? Those of one lusting for revenge? If a person be meek and sociable, tolerant, and loving to his neighbour, such a one I acknowledge and accept as a man."

It is strange that a person so deeply penetrated with

excellent sentiments towards God and men should have been a Stoic.

When reading Epictetus one comes across many noble and exalted thoughts, many true desires for holiness and purity, expressions of submissiveness and meekness, which rouse an affection for the writer ; but one constantly realizes that the unfortunate man is held between the iron bars of a prison-house, that his soul is like a bird that flutters against the wire of his cage yet never escapes. He is a pagan and a Stoic throughout.

His writings are full of " God," but alas ! sometimes he writes " the gods " or " Zeus," sometimes " the Kosmos," the ordered world, " Nature," " the Universe," " the Logos " or Reason, " the Divine." The simple word " God " is by far the more frequent ; it comes natural to him. He has passages in which he describes himself as a friend, a son of God ; scores of times he emphasizes his gratitude to God, his affectionate admiration for God, his utter obedience to God. God is his leader, his general, his master, at whose bidding he always wishes to act, and at whose call he will cheerfully die. He makes God sometimes so vividly personal that he seems to break through the bars of Pantheism, but then he is thrown back again. God is the All, God is the *Anima mundi*, God is the Sum of all things ; we are part of God, fragments flung off from the Sun of the light of reason. Epictetus is a Christian Saint in the grim embrace and steel grip of Pantheism. The voice indeed is of Jacob, but the hands, the hands are those of Esau.

Stranger still ! Epictetus does not believe in survival after death. His words are clear and unmistakable. Death ends all : there is no life beyond the grave. We are dissolved again into the elements. There is neither punishment nor reward after this life. We ought to be grateful for what God gives us in this world. Ingratitude is a crime ; it is a sign of ingratitude on one's deathbed, as a spoiled and foolish child, to be asking for more. It is like whining and crying at the end of a party because it is over. It is bad manners towards God, who wants you to make place for

others who are to be born. In such terms Epictetus often refers to those who lament the coming of death.

It seems inexplicable to us that a man who wrote such noble things about God, praised Him so fervently, and felt such gratitude towards Him, had no hope whatever of ever seeing his divine Benefactor, and was satisfied to pass away utterly out of His divine Presence at death. I cannot help thinking that the frequency with which he refers to death and the forced gaiety with which he intends to meet it is a little overdone. He seems to linger too long on the thought of kissing the hand of his divine Friend and Master before that Friend and Master dismisses him for ever and sends him into the nothingness out of which he came. He protests too much. Once, however, or twice he uses language which remotely suggests, not a dissolution into the elements of water, air, earth, or fire, but some continuance of spirit. "Is death really evil? Are we not kinsfolk of God (*συγγενεῖς τινες τοῦ θεοῦ*), and have we not come from thence? Let us go to where we came from; let us at last be freed from these chains by which we are bound and laden" (Book I, 9). In one of the fragments (No. 26) he seems to conceive of the soul as a distinct entity apart from the body; he calls it "a little psyche (*ψυχάριον*) carrying a corpse."

Another problem which faces the reader of Epictetus is this. His whole moral system rests on the principle of the freedom of the will. No one can force a human will, not even God, he says. This freedom is the supreme possession of man; in this, at least, he is independent, even from God. Hence, there can be no prayer to God in the sense of asking His divine help. God cannot influence the will. None the less, in temptations Epictetus tells us to look up to God; he tells us to undertake no great work "without God"; to refer matters to God, and similar expressions. He seems almost to urge prayer, in the ordinary Christian sense of the word, and then he falls just short of it because his Stoicism did not allow for prayer.

Another difficulty lies in his very conception itself of

human free-will. However much he emphasizes it, almost to weariness, none the less his Pantheism is incompatible with free-will. He says distinctly the will can only follow what the mind proposes to it as good. When a man sins, the fault lies in his understanding. He must be taught. Evil is ignorance, goodness is knowledge. His sinner is a mistaken man, not a wicked man. That the human will itself is at fault, Epictetus never says. He could not, for his so-called free-will is really determined. The natural consequence is that his system knows of no punishment and reward in the ordinary sense of the word. A man cannot be punished for what he did not know, though he may suffer the necessary consequence of his action. Irreconcilable with this are Epictetus's endeavours, passionate endeavours, to make people good, modest, chaste, faithful. The road of virtue is hard and long, and needs persistent practice; he tells people not to despair, though they have fallen, but to rise and begin again. He tells them to examine their conscience often to see whether they have made progress. All this is strangely inconsistent, for what does it really matter, if in the last resort ignorance implies no moral evil, but is just ignorance and nothing more? Perhaps Epictetus would answer that all sin causes disturbance of soul, makes people unhappy, and must be avoided on that account. Such an answer would be the Stoic answer for calm of soul is the ideal bliss of Stoicism. But no one can read Epictetus without realizing that sin was to him more than loss of calm of mind and consequent unhappiness. It was foul and loathsome; it was an insult to the holiness of God, everywhere present. This self-contradiction is only half-latent throughout his works, and he never solves it. The bird flutters against the wire of his cage; he can never leave it.

The strangest part of Epictetus's thoughts is the conception of his apostolate. He considers himself a messenger and an overseer sent by God. The Greek words used are "angelos kai katescopos," angel and bishop, for katescopos is a word akin to episcopos.

When the true Cynic—that is, the ideal philosopher—has prepared himself by abstention from sin, practice of virtue, and realization of the vanity of external things, then, says Epictetus (Book III, 22), " this does not suffice for him, but he must know that he is sent as a messenger (angelos) from Zeus, and sent to men concerning what is good and evil, to show them how they have gone astray. They seek the substance of good and of evil where it is not to be found, but how or where it is they have no thought. The Cynic is a true investigator of what is friendly and what is hostile to man, and he must, after careful investigation, come and announce what is true. He must not, overcome by fear, point out as enemies those who are not, nor must he in any way be terrified or confused by fancies. He must therefore be able, when the opportunity offers, to raise his hand and come forward and say what Socrates said: " Men, whither are ye going, what are ye doing? O unhappy men, as blind folk ye are drifting hither and thither. Ye are gone astray on a strange road, and the true road ye have left. Ye are seeking well-being and highest honours where they are not, and when someone shows you ye will not believe him." After having proven that our aim should not be the good of our body, or the acquiring of riches, but the improvement of the inner man, he continues: " Labour then, O wretched men, for this; care only for this, seek only this good. Perhaps ye say; ' But how is this possible? When I possess nothing, when I am naked, without house or home, and in squalor, when I am a slave and a vagrant—how can I lead a happy life?' Lo, God has sent you someone to show you by deed that it is possible. Behold me, I am a vagrant, without home, without possessions and slaves. I sleep on the bare ground; I have no wife, or children, or estate. Only the earth and the sky and one cloak! And what is lacking to me?"

Well known is the anecdote of the man whom Epictetus urged to get married, and who gave the smart rejoinder: " I am waiting to marry one of your daughters!" Epictetus remained celibate in order to lead the true life of an

apostle. His defence of celibacy for an apostle of the true philosophy is surprising on the lips of a Stoic. In a perfect state, he says, "there is nothing to prevent a Cynic—*i.e.* an apostle of philosophy—to marry and have children, for his wife then would be like him, and so would his father-in-law, and his children would be educated in the same way. But as things are at present—that is, in the time of battle—ought not the Cynic be drawn by nothing from the ministry of God and thus be able to move amongst men without being impeded by any private obligations or entangled in his private affections, which he could not set aside without losing the appearance of a true and good man? Yet if he satisfied those obligations and affections he would destroy his character as messenger, and scout, and herald of the gods." Epictetus then describes a number of distractions of a married man, and finally exclaims: "Where now is that king who is totally devoted to the common weal, the man to whom nations are entrusted and who has care of so great things? How can he have leisure enough, if he be occupied with private obligations? People live without wife and children for the sake of leading a campaign in war, or for some other interest, and such abstinence from marriage is supposed to be amply compensated, and the royal dignity of a Cynic should not be thought sufficient compensation? Perhaps we do not realize the grandeur of his state. . . . As man he has all men as adopted children—the men he has as sons, the women as daughters; thus he can move amongst all and have a care for all. Or do you think that he says harsh things to the men he meets merely as a pastime? He does it as father, as brother, as minister of the common Father Zeus!" (Book III, 22).

This description of the ideal Cynic has never been verified in any Cynic known to history, but it is a true description of the apostles of Christ and of the Christian priesthood. It starts a train of thought till then utterly alien to the Greco-Roman mind, but perfectly natural in St. Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles.

What has happened to Epictetus that, although so like,

he is so unlike his pagan contemporaries? What foreign body has entered into the sphere of his Stoic-Cynic philosophical system to cause such disturbance in the course of the stars in his heaven?

He knew the Christians. He often complains of the lack of sincerity in his philosophical followers. They pretend to be Stoics, but they lack courage, they dread pain and death. Then he asks, could Stoics not do from the dictates of reason what Galileans do from habit or instinct? The constancy of Christians in martyrdom had roused the reluctant admiration of Epictetus. He probably saw them die in hundreds in the persecution of Nero; he must have known of their sufferings in the reign of Domitian. He refers a few times to the Jews and once to baptism. Perhaps he did not clearly distinguish between Jews and Christians. The latter at first were regarded as a sect of Judaism. Besides, Jews in great numbers had received the baptism of John. The Acts speaks of such baptized Jews at Ephesus, not far from Epictetus's birthplace. There are some sentences, though not many, in Epictetus's discourses which have been pointed out as bearing a close resemblance to phrases in the epistles of the New Testament. The claim of Epictetus for his ideal Cynic cannot but remind us of St. Paul's claim to be an ambassador of God, of St. Paul's praise of virginity, and his teaching that a married man is divided in his interests. Epictetus's advice to think of God, whether eating or drinking or whatever we do, his advice to be continually singing hymns to God, and a number of other details, remind us strongly of St. Paul.

Dr. Bonhöffer maintained some years ago that St. Paul was influenced by the philosophy of Epictetus. This, however, is the height of improbability. St. Paul is at least by thirty years senior to Epictetus. The other contemporary Stoics, Seneca and Musonius, have nothing of the spirit of St. Paul. St. Paul, moreover, is so intensely individualistic, so much the stronger and more original mind, that an influence of Epictetus on St. Paul is an historical and literary impossibility.

It would not be unnatural, however, to ascribe the strange Christian tone of Epictetus to some contact with "Galileans" or their writings. Whether this is so, we cannot prove. Marcus Aurelius, the greatest disciple of Epictetus, has lost this Christian tone completely. Marcus Aurelius was a determined persecutor of the Christians. Perhaps the Phrygian slave had a heart better attuned to the message from the Crucified Galilean than the Roman Emperor. Neither accepted Christianity, but the former certainly was not far from the kingdom of God.

XVI

THE STORY OF HEROD AGRIPPA

In the year Christ was born, a young boy no more than six years old, was sent from Palestine to Rome, there to begin his education. The little man could merit nothing but deepest pity. When only a tiny toddler of three, his father and his uncle still in early manhood, underwent a shameful and unmerited death. They were strangled in prison at the command of their own father, who was blind to their obvious innocence and would not listen to their passionate pleading, maddened as he was by the suspicions aroused and fostered by their own step-brother. Their grandmother and mother, the last of the glorious line of the Maccabees, had died on the scaffold, victims also of the rage of Herod the Great, who slew Mariamne, his wife, and Alexandra, her mother. The little boy was Agrippa, son of Aristobulus, son of Herod the Great, by Mariamne. Herod having murdered three generations—the grandmother, the mother and the son—now professed some pity for his baby grandchildren, and said he would give them a good education.

The boy Agrippa had two brothers and a sister. The two brothers did not achieve much fame in history, but the name of his sister became notorious and will remain such till the end of time. She was Herodias, who thirty years later would demand the head of John the Baptist on a dish. Probably all four, the three boys and their sister, went together with their young mother, Berenice, on this journey, glad to escape the dangerous attentions of their monstrous grandfather.

Once in Rome, they were out of immediate peril. Berenice trusted that she would be remembered by a very great Lady

in that city. Antonia, a young widow, was amongst the most prominent figures in Roman society. Her husband, Drusus, one of the greatest generals of the time, had spread the terror of the Roman name to the shores of the German Ocean, when suddenly, at the age of twenty-nine, a fall from his horse ended his glorious career.

Berenice had not misplaced her trust. Antonia heartily welcomed the friend of former years, and intended to play the fairy godmother to her children. It was not difficult to find a place for Agrippa somewhere about the Imperial Court. Agrippa's own father had lived for years in Rome in the house of Asinius Pollio, and Cæsar Augustus had given him leave to stay at the Imperial Palace, for Cæsar manifested a marked predilection for the Herodian family Besides, Antonia was sister-in-law to Tiberius, the future emperor, whose influence with Augustus was already paramount, and who became emperor when the boy Agrippa had grown to be a young man of twenty-one. Antonia was a person of whom Plutarch could write that she was a beautiful and virtuous lady, a rare praise for women of that time. Agrippa was officially assigned as one of the companions to the young Drusus, Tiberius' son, and heir presumptive to the Imperial throne, a young man at the time, only five years older than Agrippa.

Agrippa grew to be a brilliant courtier, good-natured, ingenious, but fond of display and a great spendthrift. While he carefully and dutifully kept his official connection with the young Drusus, he was at the same time drawn to Caius, the grandson of his benefactress, Antonia, a young man of his own age. This Caius was no favourite of Tiberius, though he was his great-nephew, but he was immensely popular with the people. Caius' father had been poisoned by his wife, Livilla, Caius' mother.

Antonia had indeed her own sorrows. The early death of her husband was at first rendered more bearable by the early success of her beloved son, Germanicus. This excellent man had married the virtuous and noble Agrippina, who bore him no less than nine children. Unfortunately

his brilliant career roused the jealousy of Tiberius. Germanicus died at the early age of thirty-four, probably poisoned. In any case, his wife, Agrippina, came to Rome and publicly accused Piso of the murder of her husband, and Piso committed suicide to avoid public infamy. Agrippina herself soon paid for her brave defence of her husband. This woman, of exemplary character, was exiled to a tiny island in the Mediterranean, where she soon met her death, probably by order or connivance of Tiberius.

Her heart had been broken by the murder of her two eldest sons at the command of the same Tiberius. Antonia and Berenice could well sympathise with one another!

Agrippa seems to have become the intimate friend of his young imperial master. In fact, the two had very much in common. Drusus was an easy-going, good-natured, though impetuous type of man, but a drunkard and a man of immoral life. Agrippa was just the sort of companion to suit him, for a more charming boon-companion must have been difficult to find.

When Agrippa was thirty-three, his friend Drusus came to an untimely end. On one occasion Drusus had publicly cuffed the ears of Sejanus, the omnipotent favourite of his father, Tiberius. Sejanus cleverly plotted his death. He first seduced Livilla, Drusus' wife, and then persuaded her to poison her husband, after promising in writing to marry her and make her empress, should he succeed Tiberius.

The death of Drusus meant the end of the career of Agrippa in Rome. Tiberius let Agrippa know that he did not want to see him in his entourage any more, as the sight of him reminded him too much of his dead son. This was, of course, only a pretext. It was commonly understood that Tiberius did not mind the death of his son over much. He had no use for a drunkard and a debauchee, who in uncontrollable temper had thrashed his favourite minister. Agrippa quite grasped the situation. He had to leave Rome. This placed him in a very awkward situation. Agrippa was, after all, only a penniless Jewish prince, and his uncles, the tetrarchs in Palestine, were not likely to give

much help to their spendthrift nephew in the Imperial City. Moreover, Agrippa had borrowed considerable sums from Drusus, or rather through him from the Imperial Treasury. All this became publicly known, and besides the Imperial Treasury, there was a host of private money-lenders to satisfy. The fact was that as long as Berenice, his mother, was alive, his spendthrift propensities had been kept somewhat in check, but since her death there had been no limit to his foolish extravagance. The sooner he completely disappeared from Italy the better.

He escaped his creditors for a short time by burying himself in a castle in the wild tracts of Idumea. He was so discouraged by this complete reversal of his fortune that he contemplated suicide as the only way out of his disaster. It was his wife who saved him in this crisis. He had married a distant cousin of his, Cypros by name. This plucky little woman was sincerely in love with her gay husband, and fought for her five children. She managed to revive his courage, and went to beg financial assistance from her sister-in-law, the notorious Herodias.

Herodias was at the time omnipotent with Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, who, a few years later, was to grant her the head of St. John the Baptist. Herod was persuaded by her pleading. He paid some of the debts of Agrippa and assigned to him the revenues of his newly-built city, Tiberias. Agrippa took the money, but bitterly felt the humiliation of being lectured by his uncle-brother-in-law for his mad extravagance. Once when they were in their cups after dinner, Herod taunted him with the fact that he depended on him for his bread and butter. This galled Agrippa so much, that he sought for other means of subsistence, and found them.

When at Rome Agrippa had made acquaintance with Pomponius Flaccus, who had since become Governor of Syria. This Flaccus was intimate with Tiberius the Emperor, and had in fact spent days and nights in drinking with him. In a public document the Emperor had referred to him as his intimate friend ; hence, if Agrippa could secure

Flaccus' good offices, his misfortunes might come to an end. Agrippa went to pay him a visit. He was most cordially received, and made a prolonged stay with him. Agrippa's fortune seemed again to smile on him, when suddenly his good luck came again to an end.

It happened this way.

Agrippa's brother was staying with the Governor at the same time, and was by no means pleased to see Agrippa share the good things of Flaccus' palace. He at once started to work him out of the place, and soon an opportunity offered itself. The Governor of Syria was one of the highest officials of the Empire. Native states, cities and princes, vied to do him honour and obtain his good graces. The most important suits had to be decided at his court; hence to have a friend at court was of the utmost value to any litigant. Bribery is in the nature of Orientals. Now the people of Damascus had a dispute with the people of Sidon, and offered Agrippa a considerable sum of money if he would speak to Flaccus on their behalf. Agrippa, who was always hard up, greedily accepted the bribe. His brother heard of it and told the Governor, who ignominiously drove away the guest who had so abused his hospitality.

Agrippa was now at his wits' end. He would not, and could not, return to Herod, and there was literally nowhere for him to go. He came to a sudden decision to go back to Rome. After all, things had changed at Rome. Sejanus, who had dominated Roman politics so long, had fallen; the innumerable crimes of that bloodstained monster being at last discovered, Tiberius had put him to death. Tiberius had surrounded himself with new people and was apparently initiating a new policy, and Agrippa had still many friends in Rome. But he could not return there as a beggar. He must return *en grand seigneur*. Poverty is a bad passport. He must have money.

Agrippa was a Jew, and the Jewish world then, as now, was a world of money-lenders. Marsyas, the confidant of Agrippa, was told to find some one to advance a sufficient sum. He found a certain Peter, a freedman of Agrippa's

mother, and now a client of Antonia, who would advance him 2,500 Attic drachmas, in exchange for a bill of 20,000 drachmas. Almost a thousand per cent. was hard terms even for those days, but then the risk of losing the money was exceptional, and Agrippa already owed Peter moneys on other accounts. Agrippa signed: he would have signed anything for money.

No sooner is the money received, than Agrippa is on the way to Italy. He takes ship at Ptolemais, but has to put into port at Anthedon. No doubt Agrippa travels with all the swagger and show he loves, and when Herennius Capito, the Quaestor, hears of his arrival, he remembers that Agrippa is a fugitive from the Roman Treasury officials. He sends him a posse of soldiers to demand payment in the name of the Treasury, to which he owed 300,000 silver drachmas! Agrippa is lavish in specious promises to pay, but escapes secretly by night and sets sail again, this time for Alexandria. Arrived there, his only endeavour was to obtain more money, not indeed to pay Capito, but to cut a dash on arriving in Rome. He applied to perhaps the greatest Jewish financier of the time, the Alabarch of Egypt, Alexander Lysimachus, brother of Philo the Philosopher. Alexander resolutely refused.

In this crisis once again Cypros, Agrippa's wife, saved her husband.

She persuaded Alexander, who conceived a great esteem for her and her wifely virtues; but who was also moved by the security she offered, viz.: the whole estate, which she possessed in her own right. In consequence he lent five talents there and then, and promised the remainder on Agrippa's arrival in Italy. The admirable Cypros, so as not to be in her husband's way in Italy, where he was to make his supreme effort to restore his position and fortune, let him go to Rome alone, whilst she returned with her children to Palestine.

On landing in Italy Agrippa wrote to the Emperor for leave to visit him and came to him at Capraeae, where the Emperor, now over seventy-six years old, lived in retire-

ment. Tiberius replied kindly and received Agrippa well. But the very day after his reception there arrived a letter from Capito, the Quaestor, telling the disgraceful story of how Agrippa had borrowed 300,000 drachmas, which he had failed to repay, and how he had fled Capito's sphere of power on being pressed for the money. Tiberius was angry, and ordered that the young man should not again come into his presence until he paid that debt.

Now Antonia played the fairy godmother to the son of her dear friend Berenice, who in his youth had been the playmate of Claudius, her grandson. When asked she lent the 300,000 drachmas required ; and later Agrippa borrowed a million from Thallus, a money-lender in Rome, to pay Antonia back, and have a little money to play with. Antonia condoned the debt. At last Agrippa was for a time free from financial troubles ! Tiberius appointed him attendant on his only grandson, Tiberius the younger, a lad in his teens. This boy Tiberius was the darling of his grandfather, who hoped that he might succeed him. The Roman people preferred Caius, the son of Germanicus, grandson of Antonia and grand-nephew of Tiberius.

Agrippa acquitted himself cleverly of his task. Without losing favour with the Emperor, or his grandson, he remained intimate with Caius. "Birds of a feather flock together." Caius and Agrippa were kindred spirits, though the gay Jewish Prince was less of a moral monstrosity than Caius. Caius schemed to succeed the old tyrant at Capraeae, whom he fiercely hated for all his crimes against his father and mother and two brothers. But Caius played his part well. He knew that he was adored by the people and the army. The army people called him Caligula, or "Little Shoes," from the military boots in which he used to strut about when he was quite a little lad, to the delight of the rank and file. Caius felt that if he could only hold out till the death of his terrible great-uncle, he was sure to succeed him. With splendid hypocrisy he knew how to flatter the Emperor and at the same time to gain the hearts of the people, who felt kindly towards the son of their beloved Germanicus.

Macro, chief of the Praetorians and successor to Sejanus, was in constant attendance on Tiberius, though he felt a deep hatred for him. Caius succeeded in winning Macro to his cause. Caius seduced Ennia Naevia, Macro's wife, and promised to marry her and make her Empress if he should become Emperor. Naevia persuaded her unsuspecting husband to give Caius every help he possibly could. Tiberius again and again suspected the machinations and plots of Caius, but Macro was always there to impress on the old man that his suspicions were ungrounded, and that Caius was the most dutiful of nephews.

Agrippa, as Caius' bosom friend, must have been privy to all this scheming and plotting.

Once these two were imprudent enough, when returning in a carriage from a dinner, to wish all too loudly that the "Old Fellow in Capraeae" would croak and leave the world to them. A slave overheard this, and, bearing a grudge against Agrippa, escaped to the Emperor's palace and claimed that he had a secret, which the Emperor had to know for his own security. It took a long time before the slave succeeded in being admitted to Tiberius. Agrippa lived in an agony of dread, till finally, with dramatic suddenness, matters were brought to a head.

Antonia and Agrippa,her protégé, were dining with Tiberius. Antonia thought to serve Agrippa's cause best by putting a bold front upon it, and bidding Tiberius to hear the absurd accusations of that runaway slave. But the slave set out his case so well, that Tiberius, abnormally suspicious in his old age, believed him, and in sudden anger turned to Macro with the words: "Put that man in chains!" meaning Agrippa. Macro, however, pretended to misunderstand his Imperial Master, as if "that man" could not refer to Agrippa, but, of course, referred to the slave. When shortly after, Tiberius saw Agrippa in the Circus, he renewed his command: "Put that man in chains!" Agrippa threw himself on his knees before the old tyrant, begged and besought and wept, but all in vain. His fateful hour had come. Without respect for the purple he wore, he was bound to a tree in

front of the Emperor's palace, in company with a number of other prisoners. Being very thirsty on a hot day, he had to beg a drink of water from a passing slave, and Josephus tells us that one of his fellow prisoners promised him a return of his good fortune because an owl perched on the tree underneath which he was chained. Removed to prison, both Antonia and Macro saw to it that his imprisonment was not too unbearable. He was allowed special food and could see some friends, though he lost his liberty for fully six months.

Towards the end of this time, it came to pass that the Emperor had a fainting fit, and the rumour spread like lightning that he was dead. It travelled swiftly to Agrippa. His confidant, Marsyas, whispered in his ears in Hebrew: "The old lion is dead," and Agrippa at once gave vent to boisterous joy. His jailer, on learning the cause of the joy, thought it best to be on the side of the coming rulers, so he at once loosed Agrippa, Caius' friend, and joined him and the messenger who brought the news, in a feast. Soon, however, further news came that the Emperor was not dead, he had only fainted, he was quite himself again, he was actually on the way to Rome. His jailer realised the awful danger to which he had exposed himself by releasing his prisoner. He almost throttled him in his mad anxiety and put him in chains again. But the day of delivery was close at hand.

The Emperor was slowly dying, and he knew it. He had called Caius to him and committed the Empire to him, without, however, excluding his own grandson, the little Tiberius, whom he pathetically commended to Caius' mercy. Then he had another faint, but lest he should recover again, Caius came and strangled the old emperor with his own hands.

Caius succeeded to the imperial dignity without any trouble. In fact, the world rejoiced to be rid of the sombre, suspicious, tyrannical old man, whose last years caused them to forget the excellent services he had rendered to the empire in his younger days. The accession of Caius was hailed with unbounded delight. Caius soon freed his friend, Agrippa, and gave him a chain of gold of the same weight as the

chain of iron which had bound him during his imprisonment. He also gave him the tetrarchy of Philip in the north of Palestine, and the title of king.

Did Agrippa ever come across Our Blessed Lord? He might well have done. He came to Palestine some three years before Our Lord began His public life, and stayed there during the whole of it. It is not at all unlikely that he accompanied Herod to Jerusalem for the Passover, at which Our Lord died, and if so, he was just the man to join in the fun on Good Friday morning when they mocked the Prophet of Galilee. Agrippa, for all his gay and dissipated life and Roman education, remained a real Jew, and never forgot his mother tongue. If Joanna, the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward, could be a follower of Jesus of Nazareth, the penniless, though princely guest of Herod, may well have spared an hour or so to listen to the plebeian teacher, who made so much stir in the neighbourhood.

Caius was so fond of Agrippa that he kept him at Rome for almost a year, sending a Roman official meanwhile to administer his Syrian State. When Agrippa finally, in June A.D. 38, went to take possession of his kingdom, instead of going straight to Palestine, he went first to Egypt.

Why he did this, is difficult to say.

Some have suggested mere boastfulness, some a genuine desire to help the great Jewish community at Alexandria. The Jews there were passing during dark days. During the whole period of the ascendancy of Sejanus over Tiberius the Alexandrian populace felt it was pretty safe to bait the Jews, for Sejanus was a great foe of Israel. Even after Sejanus' fall, the Governor of Egypt, Avilius Flaccus, appointed under the Sejanus régime, let the anti-Jewish faction do pretty well what they liked. At the accession of Caius, Flaccus felt that his days were numbered, for Flaccus was of the party which had caused the murder of Caius' father, mother, and two elder brothers. Caius had indeed on his accession granted amnesty all round, and pretended publicly to burn all documents incriminating the enemies of his family, but Flaccus was too shrewd not to realise that this generous

gesture did not mean much. Any hostile movement of the Alexandrian populace might be an excuse for his deposition. He therefore tried to please all parties, but expecially the dominating or anti-Jewish party.

Agrippa arrived at Alexandria overnight and went straight to his host, probably the Alabarch Alexander, ignoring the Governor completely. The Governor pocketed the insult and thought it good policy to behave correctly and still show Agrippa the customary civilities.

The populace, however, was stirred by the arrival of the new Jewish King. The Jews, no doubt, were overjoyed, but the bulk of the populace broke out in mocking riots. They shouted: "Marin, Marin," which is the Aramaic for "our Lord," taking it from the lips of the excited Jews hailing their new Jewish King or Lord. They even dressed up some idiot in mock regal garments to represent Agrippa, and paid him ludicrous homage in Guy Fawkes fashion. Flaccus made no endeavour to disperse the fun-makers, and Agrippa realised that he had become the laughing stock of Alexandria, and left the city in bitter anger, meditating revenge. The populace, now out of hand, insisted on putting statues of the Emperor in the Jewish Synagogues. This the Jews so furiously resented that bloodshed seemed inevitable. Flaccus, alarmed, asked advice from the Alabarch, and ordered the statues to be removed from the Synagogue

A month after Agrippa's departure, when there was a momentary lull in the anti-Jewish riots, a sudden catastrophe inflamed the worst passions of the mob. Caius' sister, Drusilla, had died, and public mourning was being kept throughout the Empire. All shops, even those of the Jews, were closed, and the city seemed at rest, when there was a sudden preconcerted attack on the Jews everywhere. Flaccus, instead of protecting the Jews, gave out that the Jews had provoked the attack. The Elders of the Jews were flogged in public in most ignominious fashion.

Again, a month later, in August, the city was keeping the birthday festivities of Caius, and the Jews presented the customary loyal address to the throne before Flaccus.

They took this opportunity of stating that they were going to seek redress of their grievances from Caius in person. This disconcerted Flaccus, who did everything to prevent the deputation from leaving. He said that he was convinced of the loyalty of the Jews, and he himself would hand their address to the Emperor and plead their cause.

But no cunning could avert the evil hour.

The Emperor had not really burnt all the documents implicating those who had worked for the destruction of the house of Germanicus, and to deprive him of the succession and give it to Tiberius the Younger. Moreover, Agrippa cannot have waited long before writing to the Emperor accusing Flaccus of allowing the mob to insult him in Alexandria.

The Governor is suddenly arrested in dramatic fashion during a feast. He is dragged to the island of Andros and there allowed to live for a few weeks in daily expectation of death, till it pleases the Emperor to have him assassinated by a band of soldiers. The Jews in Alexandria come out in great number to the seaside to sing a hymn to God, when they hear the welcome news of the death of him who persecuted Israel.

The next year when Agrippa has been solemnly received as king in his estates and been satiated with the glory of it, he returns again to Rome via Alexandria. Though the Jews have sung their hymn of triumph over their fallen foe, their troubles are not yet at an end. The Emperor wishes his statues everywhere erected and religious honour paid to them. The Jews cannot in conscience pay their homage to the Imperial effigies in Alexandria, and yet they do not know how to evade the command. The Pagan population gloats over their distress. Agrippa promises to use his influence, but his journey to Rome has not as its sole purpose to succour the Alexandrian Jews.

He had heard that Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, and Herodias, his own sister, were on the road to Rome to solicit from Cæsar the title of king. Old Herod the Fox did not mind much, but he had been driven to this step by

his ambitious wife. She could not bear the thought that her brother should have the style and title of king, while her husband was without it. Agrippa bore Herod a grudge, because Herod had again and again thrown it in his teeth that he was a penniless adventurer, who owed his very food to him while he was in disgrace with Tiberius.

There was almost a race between these two worthies, who would first reach Rome.

Agrippa succeeded, at least he got a letter through before Herod arrived. When Herod was admitted to the Emperor's presence, the Emperor was actually reading Agrippa's letter. Instead of getting his regal title, Herod was degraded and exiled, and his tetrarchy went to increase the territories of Agrippa. No revenge could have been more complete. Herodias, to whom was granted her husband's personal estate, proudly refused it, and went with Herod into exile.

Caius seems to have been glad to see his old boon-companion back, and took him with him on his expedition into Gaul and kept him with him at Lyons. Agrippa must have witnessed the foolish sham warfare in which the Emperor indulged, and the stupid farce which was to count as a glorious victory for the Roman arms.

Agrippa cannot but have realised that Caius was going mad. The Emperor's wild debaucheries had already once brought him to the brink of the grave, but he had recovered, to Agrippa's intense relief. After his recovery the symptoms of insanity were really unmistakable, but Agrippa kept well in with his mad companion.

It was not easy.

Once Caius gravely asked the General Vitellius, whether he had never noticed him embracing the Mother Goddess, Diana? A wrong answer might mean disgrace and death. Vitellius solemnly replied: "But, Lord, how could I? Divine beings are only visible amongst themselves." In the middle of the year A.D. 40, Agrippa returned with Caius to Italy, where fearful odds awaited them. Caius was absolutely determined that his statue should receive divine honours throughout the Empire. News came to him from

Capito that the Jews had overturned one of his statues. Caius had by him an able slave, called Helicon, who used every opportunity to inflame Caius' mind against the Jews.

Caius got it into his mad brain that he wanted his statue erected in the very temple of Jerusalem, and sent peremptory orders to this effect to Petronius, the Governor of Syria. If necessary he was to call the Roman legions from the Euphrates and to enforce obedience at the point of the sword. Petronius realised that this would mean a fierce war, so dangerous that even the Roman armies might shrink from the task. He tried to gain time. He wrote back that the making of this colossal gold statue would take time, and that he would wait for a favourable opportunity after the harvest. Caius wrote back to urge Petronius to greater haste. Meanwhile the Jewish embassy, with Philo at their head, presented itself to Caius. Caius fooled them and dismissed them.

When Caius realises that he faces stubborn opposition, he is mad with fury, and when next he meets Agrippa, he shows his anger by a ferocious glare. Agrippa faints and falls in the arms of his attendants and lies half-unconscious for two days. Then he makes an heroic resolution to stand by his people. It may mean death to him, but life as a renegade Jew, as an apostate king of Israel, would be hell on earth. He wrote to Caius a noble and ably conceived letter. Perhaps to modern readers it may seem too abject, too humble but still, under the circumstances, it was a fine piece of pleading. He offers Caius his life and his possessions, his all, if he will withdraw his command concerning the statue in Jerusalem. He cleverly puts it that homage forced at the point of the sword is unworthy of a really great mind like that of Caius. Caius is reconciled to his friend of many years, and when, shortly afterwards, he is at wine with him and well in his cups, he becomes so mawkishly affectionate, that he tells Agrippa to ask whatever he chooses and he will give it to him. Agrippa asks the reversal of the order about the statue in Jerusalem, and Caius grants it.

Caius' insanity grows more monstrous every day. He poses and dresses up as a god. He must be adored wherever

he goes. Flowers must be strewn before him, hymns sung and incense burnt. Then the dagger of Chaerea killing Caius saves the empire from further degradation.

Agrippa realises in a flash that the death of Caius means his own danger as Caius' most intimate friend. He lifts the dead body of his friend from the ground, lays it on a couch, covers it over, and, in order to gain time, runs out saying that the emperor is not really dead, but is breathing still, the wound is not mortal. When finally death is ascertained, the Roman Senate, to which three legions adhere, proclaims its sovereign right; the remaining legions salute Claudius, Caius' uncle, as Emperor. With astonishing presence of mind Agrippa turns the occasion to his own benefit; he acts as go-between to Claudius and the Senate. Claudius he knew well, for Claudius was the son of his fairy godmother, Antonia. To him he went first. Claudius was a man of fifty-one, and somewhat timorous. He encouraged him to accept the nomination of his legions. To the Senate he went, assuring that he would die for their constitutional liberties, but that caution was necessary, that Claudius might be very reasonable and respect their ancient rights. Should he go and enquire from Claudius what his intentions were? Claudius gave the Senate soft words. The Senate were considering his reply. More legions declared in favour of Claudius. They were about to attack the legions that declared for the Senate. Agrippa rushes out to prevent bloodshed. The Senate realising that they are on the losing side, submit to Claudius, and both parties are heartily grateful to the Jewish Prince, whose political astuteness has prevented civil war.

The new Emperor proved as close a friend as Caius had been. He bestowed on Agrippa further territories in Syria, so that Agrippa's kingdom in extent exceeded even that of Herod the Great, and was only exceeded by that of David and Solomon. No doubt it was Agrippa's influence which finally obtained an honourable settlement of the Jewish difficulties in Alexandria, though the Jews on the death of Caius had taken revenge on their persecutors and had them-

selves been guilty of excesses. When in Dora, on the Syrian coast, a number of young fellows had profaned a Synagogue, an appeal to Agrippa soon obtained them justice. Once more the Jews had a mighty king of their own race and nation. Agrippa had coins struck at Caesarea with the inscription: *Agrippa the Great King*, to which was added sometimes: *Friend of Caesar*, sometimes: *Friend of Claudius*. He posed as a most devout Jew, and even joined the companies of Nazarites when they came to offer sacrifice in the temple on completion of their vows.

Popularity was to Agrippa as the breath of his nostrils. The whole of Agrippa's career shows the extraordinary power of engaging manners. No doubt he had a very supple conscience, and his life cannot have been very ascetic to allow him to become the bosom companion of the Imperial debauchee. Still, in that monstrous world of blood and lust in which Agrippa moved from childhood, he was apparently less degraded than most of his companions.

He was certainly of a lenient and easy-going disposition. There was a man, Silas by name, who had been Agrippa's attendant and companion during the years that he was a poverty-stricken adventurer. Now that Agrippa had become a king, this man was always boasting how he had known him in distress and penury, and out of how many scrapes he had delivered him. He treated the king with an air of equality, if not condescension. This so galled the vanity of Agrippa, that he sent him away and kept him in some castle in the district from which he came. After a time, however, he relented, and invited him to come and dine with him. The fellow rudely refused, and told the messengers to tell the king of his contempt. Whereupon Agrippa shrugged his shoulders and dismissed the matter, but no sooner was Agrippa dead, than the king's friends murdered Silas in prison.

Another time news was brought to Agrippa that a certain Simon, a Jew from Jerusalem, was declaiming to great crowds that the king was only half a Jew, that he continually broke the precepts of the Law of Moses. The king had him brought

to the palace, made him sit by his side, and good humouredly asked: "Now, my man, what precisely do you think is done in this palace contrary to the Law of Moses?" When the man could mention nothing in detail, Agrippa still treated him kindly, in fact, gave him some presents and sent him away.

The tale which is sometimes told of Herod the Great is much more likely to be true of Herod Agrippa, that on hearing the text read from Deuteronomy: "Thou mayest not make a man of another nation king, that is not thy brother," he sighed in distress, for the Herodian family was of semi-pagan origin, whereupon the attendants cried: "Be not distressed, Agrippa, thou art our brother."

Whether from a sense of piety, or from policy, or from racial pride, or from all combined, Agrippa was certainly most intensely Jewish. Perhaps this is not to be wondered at in the grandson of the proud and noble Mariamne, the last royal daughter of the Maccabees.

During his short reign he resided by preference in Jerusalem, and built a new wall for that city of such strength and magnificence that even the imperial authorities took umbrage, and gave him the hint to discontinue fortifying the city. Whereas Herod the Great squandered his wealth mostly on new and pagan cities, and even pagan temples, Agrippa benefited Jewish towns. He knew that his uncompromising Judaism alienated the large minority of non-Jewish subjects of his kingdom. These he tried to placate by building a costly theatre at Beyrouth, in which he gave shows on a great scale. He pandered to such an extent to the depraved taste of the people, that he got up a mock-battle, in which no less than fourteen hundred gladiators fought and mostly found their death. Josephus' lame defence of this act of barbarity only emphasises the horrible contrast between Agrippa's professions of piety and his pagan morality.

For all his Roman sympathies he was soon at loggerheads with the Roman Governor of Syria. On one occasion, out of vanity and love of splendour, he entertained no less than

five kings of the surrounding native States, Commagena, Homs, Armenia, Pontus and Chalcis. This suggested concerted action between local potentates, which the Imperial Government intensely feared. Marcus, the Governor, let each of them know that this must not occur again, and thus he affronted Agrippa.

When Agrippa was in Jerusalem for Passover in A.D. 44, in an access of Jewish zeal he tried to destroy what appeared to him and to his worldly mind, an absurd heterodox Jewish sect which worshipped the crucified Jesus of Nazareth as a divine Messias. By that time these new believers must have counted at least some ten to twelve thousand in the city. The thing must stop before it assumed more dangerous proportions. A certain James was reputed to be the most fanatical leader of the sect. Agrippa had him put to the sword. Seeing that this measure proved immensely popular, if not among the simple folk, at least among the classes that mattered, he had another prominent leader taken up and cast in prison. The people called him Cephas, or Petros in Greek. He had him safely guarded, intending after the Passover to make a public example of him and thus to gratify the people. Then a stupid thing happened. The man somehow escaped. The guards aggravated their offence by persisting in a silly lie about the gates of the prison never having been opened. As if the man could have disappeared through closed doors! The man was spirited away. The thing proved treachery somewhere. Agrippa had the guards put to death. It was no doubt annoying, but he soon had ample opportunity to forget the annoyance. A few days later, some time in May, he travelled to Caesarea, where he intended to make a grandiose display.

Caesarea was the political and commercial capital of his kingdom. It was a modern city, that could compare with some of the finest cities anywhere. As a seaport its importance in the eastern Mediterranean had been steadily rising. So likewise had Beyrouth, the town for which he had done so much. The old seaports of Tyre and Sidon resented it. These ancient free cities felt their agelong glory departing.

They struggled for ancient privileges; but with Agrippa against them, who controlled the land immediately behind the narrow coastal strips, they were helpless.

Agrippa had at first angrily resisted them. Money, however, is very powerful; the Tyrians and Sidonians had in true Eastern fashion persuaded Blastus, Agrippa's Chamberlain, and he had talked his master over. There was to be a reconciliation of interests. At the same time there would be a grand show and great games for the people, who would have the opportunity of admiring their king meeting these foreign ambassadors and making a treaty with them. Caesarea was more of a pagan than a Jewish town, the non-Jewish population outnumbering the people of Israel. The Roman soldiery that garrisoned the town were bitterly hostile to the new Jewish king. Caesarea had been in the Roman Province of Judea under a Roman Governor for just thirty years, and now for the first time since the deposition of Archelaus in A.D. 10, it had reverted to the dominion of a native Jewish prince. It seemed that both the troops stationed there and the pagan population secretly resented this as a humiliation. Agrippa intended to dazzle both Jew and Pagan with the splendour of his court. For himself he got a regal garment made of cloth of silver in keeping with the dignity of his majesty. He took his children with him that they might enjoy the spectacle, his eldest boy, a youth of seventeen, and his three daughters, two of whom were barely more than children, one being ten, the other six. When standing in the theatre in full view of thousands of people, the rays of the sun caught his silver mantle and he appeared all resplendent in light. Groups of flatterers, stationed here and there, cried out when he started addressing the people: "It is the voice of a god! Be merciful to us, for hitherto we reverenced thee only as a man, now we know that thou art above us mere mortals."

A glow of satisfaction spread over his features and he let the blasphemous adulation pass without protest. The great ceremonial was not yet over when he felt the most excruciating pain in his intestines, and he had to be carried away

into the palace. Josephus makes him utter words of repentance, submission to God and repudiation of the lying flattery just heard.

Let us hope they are true.

Agrippa passed five days in utter agony, his inward parts seemed to be devoured by worms. In the room where he lay he could see from the window the big crowds of terrified Jews, who in sack cloth and ashes begged God to save their king. They well realised what it would mean to them, and how they would suffer from the hatred of their pagan neighbours if their Jewish king died. Finally, worn out by the pain, Agrippa gave up the ghost. The Roman soldiery, who, of course, were not Romans, but mostly native levies, in great numbers Samaritans, the fiercest foes of the Jews, broke into Agrippa's palace as soon as his death was known, and carried off his unfortunate daughters, subjecting them to the most shameful treatment. In order to exasperate the Jews the pagan population appeared everywhere with festal garlands on their heads and reeking with pleasurable ointments and pouring out libations to the god of the dead, who had obliged them by sending this upstart Jewish king to the shades.

Judea became a Roman Province again.

XVII

JOSEPHUS

One of our chief sources for the history of the world in which Christ and His apostles moved is Flavius Josephus. What sort of man was he? If we know the personal character of an historian, we possess a means to appreciate the value of his historical work more correctly than if his personality be totally unknown to us. Now it is quite true that all we know about Josephus must be gathered from his own works; yet in gathering these details together for the purpose of valuing his history we are not moving in a vicious circle. Josephus is a very different writer from Philo. Philo hardly ever refers to himself directly, and is most reticent about his own personal affairs. Josephus, on the contrary, is very talkative about himself. Moreover, Josephus was a man of action. He was for a time, in a most critical period, in military command in Galilee. His very career is an indication of what sort of man he was, and what sort of reliance we can place on his words. If then we gather together from scattered references a more or less complete picture of the man and his life, we assist the intelligent appreciation of the historical information which so largely depends on his words.

He was born in Jerusalem probably in the very year that St. Paul after his conversion returned to the Holy City. In saying he was born in Jerusalem we perhaps exceed the limit of what can strictly be proved by rigorous logic. In any case, his father and mother lived in Jerusalem, and he himself must have spent his youth there even though his actual birth was conceivably elsewhere. He was a lad of thirteen when Paul, Barnabas and Silas came from Antioch to tell the Apostles of the marvellous success of the Gospel in that

pagan city. In that year Josephus was made a Bar-Mizvah —a son of the law, thereby entering on full responsibility as a little Jew, accountable to God and to Israel for his own observance of the Torah and the traditions. Even as a younger lad of about eight years he must have heard of the execution of James, a prominent follower of Jesus of Nazareth, and the attempt to kill Peter, which so signally failed. When he was a man of twenty-one, it is not at all unlikely that he stood amongst the crowd that witnessed the capture of St. Paul in the Temple and his imprisonment by the Roman officer who mistook him for an Egyptian revolutionist. He must then have heard the passionate defence by that famous Jew of Tarsus of his life and teaching. In those days, it is true, Josephus knew hardly any Greek, but St. Paul spoke in Hebrew, which was Josephus' mother tongue. Very likely, indeed, Josephus himself was present at the meeting of the Sanhedrin which discussed the case of St. Paul the following day. If not, then at least Josephus' father Matthias, then a middle aged man of fifty, must have been there, considering that he belonged to the chief family of the first of the twenty-four courses of priests that served in the temple. He was, moreover, highly connected with first Jewish families of the time; whereas his wife, Josephus' mother, was a descendant of the royal house of the Maccabees. If Josephus was there we may be certain that he sided with the Pharisees against the Sadducees in favour of St. Paul, for Josephus was a Pharisee himself and was proud of it. The fanatical methods of St. Paul's opponents were alien to his mentality.

Of course Josephus was well-acquainted with the Christian movement. As priest he cannot but have witnessed them worshipping in the Temple; and since, according to the testimony of St. James the Less mentioned in the Acts (ch. xxi, 20), there were several tens of thousands of Jews who were Christians, and at the same time still zealous observers of the Mosaic Law, it would be inconceivable that Josephus should not have come across them either in their homes or in public places. The area of Jerusalem was not like the area of

greater London to-day; it was more like the City, which stretches from Aldgate to Charing-Cross. Tens of thousands of active propagandists cannot have moved in so small an extent and an intelligent citizen be ignorant of their doings. Besides, Josephus gives a sympathetic account of the St. James we have just mentioned, as we shall quote hereafter. Moreover, Josephus was intensely interested in religious questions from boyhood onward. His father's house was a rendezvous of Jewish casuists and theologians.

Josephus was a precocious child and judging from the tone of his writings, somewhat of a self-righteous prig. He tells us that even at the age of fourteen he was asked his opinion about points of Jewish law by the principal men of the city. When he was sixteen, he started his religious training, associating consecutively with the three chief sects of his day, the Sadducees, the Pharisees and the Essenes. He stayed for almost three years with a certain Banus, who lived in the desert very much after the fashion of St. John the Baptist and whose frequent cold baths to allay his passions struck the imagination of his youthful disciple.

When Josephus was nineteen he returned to Jerusalem and permanently joined the sect of the Pharisees. We can understand why neither Sadducees nor Essenes were able permanently to attract the impressionable youth. The Sadducees with their lack of stress on the existence of a life hereafter, their old fashioned conservatism, their realistic if not semi-rationalistic outlook on life in which they found no place for angels and spirits must have repelled the young man, although by family tradition and family association Sadduceeism must have been nearer to him than the rather plebeian Phariseeism. The Essenes, a kind of Jewish-hellenistic monks of whom some 4,000 were scattered in small communities all over Palestine, must have exercised a stronger influence over the idealistic young man, and, I fancy, exercised this influence throughout life. Josephus' claim to foretell the future, his assumption of the rôle of a prophet, reminds us strongly of Essenic practices. If he did not actually enter the Order and bind himself by its vows,

this was no doubt due to his predilection for active, political and military life and his uxorious nature, for Josephus was many times married, whereas the Essenes were conspicuous by their continence and even by total abstinence of marriage.

Josephus then became a Pharisee, but his writings make it plain that he was a very liberal Pharisee indeed. He no doubt always was a firm believer in the Afterlife, the Resurrection from the dead, and the angel and spirit world ; but of Pharisaic scrupulosity and Talmudic casuistry he does not show any signs. He seems to have had a very pliable conscience. Though undoubtedly proud of being a Jew, he accommodated himself surprisingly well to the pagan world. His first great experience with the world outside Palestine took place when he was twenty-six years old. Felix the Governor of Judæa, before whom and whose girl-wife Drusilla St. Paul preached " about righteousness, continence and the judgment to come," was a lascivious brute. He and his brother Pallas were amongst the worst characters of the time. This Felix had imprisoned and sent to Rome for judgment, a number of Jewish priests conspicuous for piety and asceticism ; ' they lived on figs and nuts.'

Josephus went to Rome in the hope to be of assistance to them. He suffered shipwreck in the Adriatic, but he swam for his life all night, was picked up by another ship and reached the harbour of Puteoli. There he met a Jewish play-actor, who was a favourite of Nero. Through him he was introduced to Poppæa, Nero's wife, who influenced her husband in favour of the prisoners. He seems to have charmed Poppæa for she gave him many presents on his return home.

When he arrived back at Jerusalem, he found the first beginnings of the Jewish revolt had already taken place, the Jews had occupied the fortress Antonia which overlooked the Temple and the city and they had massacred the Roman garrison. Josephus was placed in a cruel dilemma. He had sense enough to realize that if it came to regular warfare, the ultimate victory would be with the Romans ; on the other hand his life was not worth a moment's purchase if he opposed the Jewish party which was momentarily victorious.

He claims that he dissuaded them to the utmost of his power and then for safety's sake withdrew into the inner court of the temple. There he remained till the massacre of Menahem and his men, who had been the leaders in this first onslaught on the Romans. After that he stayed amongst the high-priests and chiefs of the Pharisees. Even after Menahem's death the populace remained so excited that a misplaced word might mean death, hence Josephus and his fellow-priests continued to dissimulate. They pretended to agree with the rebels, and yet they secretly counteracted their activities. They hoped that the governor of Syria would soon be on the scene and put an end to the embarrassing situation.

Unfortunately the Governor came, indeed, but suffered a signal defeat. He ignominiously withdrew from Jerusalem and saved only a few hundreds of his army. It was a shameful disaster, the causes of which even Josephus does not fully explain. This initial success of the Jewish arms seems to have driven the people of Jerusalem out of their senses, and to have terrified the many cities in Palestine with a partially non-Jewish population. These cities, to forestall any danger, forthwith massacred their Jewish fellow-citizens. Caesarea, Damascus, Scythopolis and other places were scenes of the most ghastly bloodshed. The Jews retaliated in the villages and townships where they had the majority, and thus the greater part of Syria witnessed the most furious civil war, even before the bulk of the Roman legions marched to crush the rebellion. Moreover, the death of Nero, the usurpation of the three phantom emperors—Galba, Otto and Vitellius—and the election of Vespasian delayed the progress of the Roman arms. Palestine for three years was the theatre of incessant carnage and destruction.

The behaviour of Josephus during these years remains inexplicable, even after his own vindication of his conduct in his autobiography.

The priests at Jerusalem, feeling that the direction of affairs would completely pass out of their hands unless they

themselves took the lead in the revolutionary movement, placed themselves at the head of it. They sent Josephus and two other priests to Galilee. Josephus makes out that their purpose was to keep that part of Galilee which was as yet undisturbed from rising. It may be so, but Josephus' conduct looks uncommonly like double treachery or at least the weakness of a vaccilating character.

Sepphoris in central Galilee sides with the Romans. Josephus protects them and helps them. Sepphoris' rival, the city on the lake, Tiberias, took the anti-Roman side at the instigation of Justus of Tiberias, Josephus' lifelong foe. The city of Gamala remained true to the Romans under the influence of Philip, notwithstanding the provocation received from Varus. Josephus first resided at Sepphoris and then moved to the suburbs of Tiberias with the intention of entering that city. To the citizens he told the transparent falsehood that he was sent by the Jerusalem authorities to persuade them to destroy the palace of Herod Antipas because it had graven images in it, and he begged leave to enter the city to carry out this command. The inhabitants did indeed plunder Herod's palace and set it on fire, and killed all the Greeks in the city, but Josephus' ruse did not succeed; they would not allow him to enter. Josephus left for upper Galilee, but again returned, and this time entered the town. He collected together the remnants of the plundered furniture of the palace and handed it to a committee of citizens to keep it safe for King Agrippa II, who was the Roman vassal-king in whose territory Tiberias was situated.

Josephus then went to visit John of Gischala, a mountain stronghold some forty miles north of the Lake of Galilee. This John was the most determined foe of the Roman name and a brigand withal. John commandeered all the corn and the oil of the district, and Josephus, under the plea that he was powerless, allowed him to do it. Then Josephus began to fortify the cities of Galilee and gather arms, but all the time leaving it undetermined against whom or for whom these military precautions were intended. Josephus resided

in Cana in Galilee, and claims to have administered Galilee with justice and moderation.

John of Gischala came down to Tiberias with a thousand men to refuse allegiance to Josephus and to kill him. He nearly succeeded. Josephus leapt from the tribune from which he was speaking, was carried on the back of a faithful servant through the crowd, jumped into a boat and rowed to Taricheae, a few miles to the east on the lake.

Many Galileans took Josephus' side and breathed vengeance against the people of Tiberias and against John of Gischala; but Josephus claims that he soothed their anger and told them he hoped to settle the matter without bloodshed. However, Josephus found Tiberias too hostile for him, and went to stay again at Sepphoris. In this city likewise he was immediately distrusted, and an attempt was made upon him by the pro-Roman faction. The scheme of the citizens was betrayed to Josephus, who seems only to have grumbled a little that the city was so ungrateful to him. Josephus had by this time apparently gathered a considerable army of Galileans around himself, but he somehow avoided an armed conflict with the Roman forces. He pretends that he offered them battle but they refused. He contented himself with foraging raids, and out-manœuvring the foe. When an enemy caravan was plundered by Galileans and the spoil brought to Josephus, he returned the spoil secretly under a lying pretence to the enemy. He makes the hypocritical pretence that the Mosaic law prohibited to spoil even the enemy. No wonder that both Galileans and Romans suspected Josephus of treachery. When at Taricheae he was nearly murdered in his sleep, but had again a marvellous escape and by telling more lies with a solemnity in the public theatre, he deceived the people a little longer. Josephus must have been a consummate actor and a most egregious liar. Having first given out that the plunder of the caravan was to be sent to Jerusalem, he now with tears in his eyes, assured them he always intended to use it for the rebuilding of the walls of Taricheae! Some people gave him credit

for good intentions, but many still distrusted him. Six hundred came, surrounded his house and wanted to fire it. He invited the leaders in on the plea that he would give them the money of the caravan plunder in their own hands. One of them came, Josephus had him whipped, cut one of his hands off and hung it round his neck. This cowed his opponents for a while.

When the people of Tiberias wanted to desert the Jewish cause and go over to the vassal-king of Rome, Agrippa II, Josephus cleverly prevented this by sailing towards Tiberias with a great number of fishing boats, which from a distance looked like an armed fleet approaching to take the town. But if Josephus was really in his heart of hearts on the side of Rome, as he tries to make out, why did he prevent the most important city of Galilee peacefully to surrender to Rome's vassal? Josephus' account is simply full of such contradictions, which rouse the gravest suspicions of his straightforwardness.

John of Gischala renewed his attempt to ruin Josephus by secretly intriguing at Jerusalem for his removal from the command in Galilee. But Josephus' old father, who lived there, learnt about their schemes and warned his son. His son at first publicly gave out that within three days he would leave Galilee and return to Jerusalem, but afterwards pretended that so much pressure was brought upon him by the Galileans that he decided to stay, in spite of the command of the Jerusalem authorities. He claimed to have had a vision at night. The apparition told him to be of good cheer, that great success awaited him and that he was destined to fight with the Romans. He now gathered a considerable force around him of some 8,000 footmen and some cavalry and did some very distant skirmishing with Roman forces round the seaport of Ptolemais. No casualties are reported on either side.

A game of deep and dark cunning began to be played between the emissaries from Jerusalem and Josephus, as they dared not to attack Josephus openly, considering the strength of the army on his side. With lying courtesy

they invited him to come without many attendants and see them. They intended to assassinate him on arrival. Josephus wormed the secret out of the soldier who brought the invitation. He promised him a shilling for every pint he drank. When the soldier had gained many shillings, he became very talkative and told Josephus of the death which awaited him if he accepted the invitation. Josephus most courteously declined it, pleading a previous engagement—he was watching the movements of the Roman General before Ptolemais; he was, of course, most anxious to confer with them. Could they not come to see him, instead he them? Another attempt was made to inveigle Josephus into a trap, but he eluded it. Then the emissaries from Jerusalem wrote letters to all the principal towns and villages of Galilee with accusations against Josephus, but he cleverly intercepted them all. John of Gischala, who was the moving spirit of the anti-Josephite faction, having collected an armed force of 3,000 men almost brought about an internecine war between the two Jewish factions in Galilee, but Josephus prides himself that by his dexterity he avoided actual bloodshed. The emissaries, however, gained some footing in Tiberias, and the proceedings in the great synagogue there are thrilling reading. Josephus' enemies had contrived to arrange for a day of fasting and prayer. This they hoped would bring Josephus and his following unarmed to the synagogue. But Josephus had shrewd suspicions. He and some of his friends hid arms under their cloaks. This saved them. The attack in the synagogue was made just a few minutes too soon; before John of Gischala with his band had quite come up. Being armed Josephus and his friends just extricated themselves in time, escaped by narrow passages to the lake, took ship and sailed to Taricheae.

Later on Josephus had his revenge. He attacked the city with ten thousand men and by a stratagem took it. He set a part of the city on fire, but he claims to have acted very mercifully and restored the plunder which his soldiers had taken. The people of Tiberias were great jesters; they contrived a great mock-funeral for Josephus and held ludicrous

lamentations round his supposed bier. Now, however, they had to play a softer tune. Josephus proscribed the adherents of John of Gischala, threatening to burn their houses and sell their goods unless they surrendered, but to grant a complete amnesty to all others. Four thousand of John's men threw down their arms. Now at last Josephus was drawn, evidently against his will, into an act of direct war with Rome. He took the city of Sepphoris, the mainstay of pro-Roman influence in Galilee, but he managed to evacuate it again almost immediately afterwards under the lying pretext that he knew that a big Roman army was approaching to retake it. He boasts that he thus saved it from being plundered. Shortly afterwards a party in Tiberias sent secretly to King Agrippa II to come and take the town. The king promised to come. Unfortunately his messenger was caught by the anti-Roman party. Fanatical Galileans wanted to burn the town for its treachery. Josephus, always resourceful in trickery and deception, managed to cajole the Galileans and to save the king's messenger.

Josephus made another assault on Sepphoris. The Jews penetrated the town, but as it now had a strong garrison, Josephus was driven out again and then driven away altogether. He claims that twelve Roman footmen and two horsemen were killed and only a single man of his own. The casualties were singularly disproportionate to the immense display of valour and numbers which Josephus suggests. Once more, with the help of 4,000 men, he tried to prevent king Agrippa cutting off supplies from the town of Julias in a singularly ineffective and feeble way. He fell from his horse, broke his wrist and was carried into Capharnahum, there he continued feverish for a day ; and as the physicians directed, he was removed to Taricheae.

By this time Titus had brought considerable reinforcements to Vespasian his father at Ptolemais, where father and son had now over sixty thousand men under their command. They moved forward cautiously into Galilee, and occupied Tiberias. They found that Josephus' army had dwindled to small proportions and that he had fled to the mountain

fastness of Jotapa, about sixteen miles west of the lake of Galilee. This city, built over a precipice and only approachable from the north side, held out against Vespasian's army for forty-seven days, and at last only succumbed through treachery.

Josephus can tell a story well, and the siege of Jotapa is one of his best. All attempts to take it by storm failed, and finally Vespasian decided on a regular siege. A hundred and sixty engines for hurling huge stones into the city surrounded the wall. With infinite pains a bank was raised against the city wall by the Romans, who approached it ever closer. The Jews made furious sallies and poured boiling oil from the battlements on the besiegers. The food, and especially the water supply was cut off from the city, though for a time the besieged managed to obtain water by a ruse. When the city was in a desperate state Josephus intended to leave it and provide for his personal safety, but the Jews learnt his plans and frustrated them; for good or for ill he had to stay with them to the end. Battering rams were steadily demolishing the walls, till the besieged set fire to the Roman engines, but the Romans built other ones. When finally a breach was made, the Jews had built further fortifications behind the wall thrown down. A general assault was ordered and continued for a whole day, but failed miserably. Then Vespasian built three movable towers of wood covered with iron plates, fifty feet high, and pushed them against the wall. The garrison were now utterly exhausted, and early in the morning the watchers fell asleep at their posts. Titus himself and a few followers used the hour of dawn to overpower the watch, and of a sudden noiselessly entered the city. Almost before the populace was awake, the city was taken and the massacre begun. Forty thousand Jews perished in the siege; twelve hundred women and children were led away captive. This happened on July the first A.D. 67, a few days after St. Peter was crucified in Rome.

During the slaughter Josephus with some other men lay hid in a subterranean den. He tried to escape by night

time, but failed. On the third day a woman betrayed him. Vespasian sent two tribunes to fetch him, promising him his life. Josephus feared a trap and refused; then Vespasian sent a tribune who was personally acquainted with Josephus; in consequence Josephus decided to surrender. He tries to make us believe that he did so under divine inspiration, as having a heavenly prophecy to deliver, and that he spoke this prayer in ecstasy: "God, since it pleaseth thee, who hast created the Jewish nation, to humble it, and since all their good fortune is gone over to the Romans, and since thou hast made choice of this soul of mine to foretell what is to come to pass hereafter, I willingly give them my hands, and am content to live. And I protest openly that I do not go over to the Romans as a deserter of the Jews, but as a minister from thee." He that can believe it, let him believe it; the people that lurked with Josephus in the same den evidently didn't, and we can excuse them.

They rebuked him as a coward and turned their swords upon him; they preferred self-slaughter to slavery. Josephus was in mortal dread, and we are asked to believe that he read them a long, closely-reasoned lecture on the wickedness of suicide. In any case, his companions remained firm: none of them should leave that den alive. Josephus suddenly forgot the arguments eloquently set forth in his lecture and agreed. They should kill one another; a man, having slain his neighbour, should forthwith bare his neck for the stroke of the sword of the next man. The order of procedure should be decided by lot. Josephus was surprisingly lucky in being the last of all. Before killing his man Josephus asked him whether it would not be more sensible if they both surrendered. The shrewd fellow said Yes, and they both gave themselves up to the Romans.

Josephus was brought before Vespasian and Titus. Titus persuaded his father to deal gently with the prisoner. Vespasian answered that he would send him to Nero. Josephus begged to see these two privately, and then delivered his prophecy: "Vespasian, thou thinkest of no more than of having taken Josephus himself captive, but I have come to thee as

messenger of great tidings. Had I not been sent to thee by God, I would have known how, by Jewish law, it behoves a general to die. Dost thou send me to Nero? Why? Are Nero's successors until thee still amongst the living? Thou, Vespasian art Caesar and Emperor, thou and this thy son. I certainly deserve to be punished if I too rashly affirm anything from God."

Vespasian saw through the trick. He was an honest soldier of about sixty years of age, and said in derision that if Josephus was a prophet he would have foreknown the fall of Jotapata and his own captivity. Josephus boldly replied that as a matter of fact he had prophesied this precisely.

Josephus' prophecy shows his acute political foresight. He knew, of course, that political trouble was brewing. During the whole of the siege of Jotapa Nero had been playing the fool in the theatres of Greece. Even Helion, Nero's confidant, insisted that he had to return to Italy to prevent disaster. Julius Vindex declared himself emperor a few months after the fall of Jotapa. Galba declared himself emperor three or four months later. Otho murdered Galba and made himself emperor on January 15, A.D. 69. Vitellius had been proclaimed as emperor in Cologne on January 2, A.D. 69. The Roman legions of Egypt and Syria declared Vespasian emperor less than a year after Josephus' "prophecy."

Not only did Josephus show his acute foresight and insight of the political situation, this, on account of his acquaintance with King Agrippa II, was perhaps not very unnatural, but he proved himself a keen observer of character. Vespasian was a blunt, upright soldier, but he was intensely superstitious. Tacitus tells us of the visions and the miracles which were supposed to have happened to Vespasian in Alexandria and in the temple of Serapis there a few months later. Tacitus and Suetonius both tell us that throughout the whole of Syria and Mesopotamia, i.e. through the whole Orient, the expectation existed that some one from the East, some one from Judæa, should grasp the supreme power. Jewish Messianic expectations, spread abroad through the

Sibyllines as well as through the Greek scriptures, had influenced very many in a vague manner.

Josephus, with considerable adroitness, turned this in his favour. The border line between deliberate fraud and semi-conscious self-deception is sometimes hard to draw. That Josephus' visions and dreams came at convenient times cannot be gainsaid, but an Eastern of the first century must be judged more leniently than a Western of the twentieth.

Vespasian at first had his doubt about the genuineness of Josephus' prophecies, but when he became emperor he felt grateful towards the Jew who had foretold him his coming greatness. He, with full consent of Titus his son, gave Josephus his liberty and honourable treatment. In A.D. 68 Vespasian went to Alexandria and left Titus to besiege Jerusalem. When the first and the second wall had fallen and Titus prepared to take the inner wall and the Temple, he employed Josephus to persuade his fellow countrymen to surrender. Josephus found a spot where he could not be reached by the missiles of the besieged and yet reach them with his voice. He harangued them at length, and begged them to pity the women, children and old folk who were dying from starvation in the city. Josephus' mother, wife and relatives were within the city, but he offered his own blood and that of his nearest and dearest, if they would only listen to his words. At one time Josephus approached the wall too closely, and was stunned by a stone thrown at him. The besieged made merry at the thought that they had killed him, and his mother in prison bewailed his death; but Josephus recovered and showed himself to the Jews again.

The description of the siege of Jerusalem by Josephus is such a classic that there is no need here to repeat its details. Anyone who has ever read it is not likely ever to forget. It is the ghastliest story of a siege probably in all the world's history, and probably the most awful calamity that ever befel a people in war. A normal man, having read it for the first time, is haunted by the memory of it for days. The

wild massacres of the contending parties within the walls, the thousands of crucifixions of Jews without, the slow agony of the famine, the almost incredible ferocity of all make it seem a hellish struggle between demons and beasts without parallel on earth.

When Titus had demolished the tower Antonia which adjoined the Temple, before storming the Temple itself, he asked Josephus to make another attempt to persuade his countrymen to surrender. Titus seems to have had a sincere religious scruple to defile so sacred a place with bloodshed. It was all in vain ; inch by inch the Temple Mount had to be forcibly occupied with immense slaughter and destruction of men and buildings by fire.

Josephus, who had accompanied Vespasian to Alexandria, and then assisted at the whole of the siege of Jerusalem, was in the end enabled to obtain the liberty of his family, the life of his brother and fifty friends. Once when he went to the ruins of the Temple he saw a great number of captive women and children and obtained the liberty of about one hundred and ninety. Once on his return from the village of Thecoa he saw a great number of Jews crucified ; he recognised three of them, begged Titus to spare them, and had them taken down. Two of them died, one survived.

Titus gave Josephus property in Palestine, and took him with him to Rome. Vespasian lodged him in his own house which he occupied before his succession to the empire. He gave him a pension and the status of a Roman citizen : Josephus lived in peace for a considerable number of years. He was a much married man. He had at least four wives we know of, and he divorced two. He had three sons. He remained a favourite of Vespasian, Titus, and afterwards Domitian, and Domitian's wife did him many a kindness.

Josephus had bitter enemies. Jonathan of Cyrene nearly ruined him with his accusations, but happily Vespasian enquired into the matter and exculpated Josephus. The Flavian emperors seem always to have taken Josephus' part, though his enemies did not cease to attack him even in his old age.

Justus of Tiberias was his inveterate foe. This Justus was also pardoned by the Romans in the Jewish war and wrote a history of it. In this history he said many things not complimentary to Josephus and asserted many awkward things. It is a pity this work is lost, it would have enabled us to control Josephus' account better. Josephus regarded the attack of Justus as so serious that he wrote in reply to it. It is evident that he had the most intense aversion for the man.

Vespasian gave a sort of *imprimatur* to Josephus' history of the Jewish war ; he endorsed it with his name. There can hardly be any doubt therefore that it is correct in all its main features. It is strongly pro-Roman in tendency, and finds some excuse for the crimes committed by Vespasian and Titus. Vespasian's abominable treachery to the inhabitants of Taricheae receives a lame excuse from Josephus. Vespasian murdered 1,200 old men, sent six thousand young men to hard labour at the Isthmus at Corinth, and sold 30,400 as slaves. Thus he broke his solemn word to people who had put their trust in him. Titus' cruelty in allowing the crucifixion of thousands of Jews who had fled from Jerusalem is also somehow palliated. On the other hand, the crimes of the last four Roman governors of India—Felix, Festus, Albinus and Florus, are brought out in vivid colours, and Josephus makes it clear that the last twenty years previous to the rebellion the Jews groaned under the most inhuman tyranny.

When the old-Russian translation of the first or Aramaic edition of *The Jewish War* appears we shall know more of Josephus' genuine sentiments, for the Greek edition is no doubt strongly doctored to please his pagan readers. Josephus' attempt to use Greek and pagan phraseology to make Jewish ideas clear to heathen minds often gives his words a vague and pagan flavour ; the more so as, not being a great master of Greek, he had to rely on his Greek friends to render his histories more readable. None the less, Josephus reads less pagan than Philo. Josephus, after all, was a priest from Jerusalem, who till the age of thirty-five could

only write in Aramaic, though having a smattering of Greek.

His intimate friendship with such a Hellenised Jew as King Agrippa II gives us a clue to his character. Fiercely Jewish in the depth of their soul, their Judaism was more national and racial pride than piety. Even this racial pride accommodated itself to personal interests. They esteemed themselves above the uncouth fanaticism of their fellow-countrymen. The overweening personal vanity of Josephus makes the reader smile sometimes when it does not irritate him beyond endurance. Josephus had a genuine horror of bloodshed, he was a hero with the pen and not with the sword; his administration of Galilee seems to have been singularly futile. His contortion of the Messianic prophecies gives us the measure of the man. He calls them ambiguous oracles, pointing to the triumph of the Flavian Emperors. He was a dreamer indeed, but one who dreamt to some purpose. The one conviction, however, which rings true in all his works is that the fall of Jerusalem was a divine punishment for the innumerable crimes that preceded it, and it would not be surprising if amongst these crimes he also counted the crucifixion of that meek and majestic figure, the Prophet from Nazareth in Galilee, so free from the fanaticism of the furious zealots that ruined his people.

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